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# STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

PREPARED FOR READERS OF THE ENGLISH  
NEW TESTAMENT. DESIGNED FOR USE  
IN BIBLE CLASSES, PRAYER MEET-  
INGS, AND PRIVATE STUDY

*By*  
George P. Eckman, D. D.

FIRST AND SECOND SERIES

Two Volumes in One

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To My Wife

OUR English speech was first enriched by a version of John's Gospel in a very memorable fashion. The Venerable Bede, a learned monk of Jarrow, on the banks of the Tyne, in the concluding days of his devoted life, translated this wonderful book into the Anglo-Saxon tongue. As his last hour was approaching, the amanuensis to whom he was dictating exclaimed, "There remains now only one chapter, but it seems difficult for you to speak." "It is easy," replied Bede. "Take your pen, dip it in ink, and write as fast as you can." After putting down the sentences as they fell from his trembling lips, the scribe said, "Now, master, only one sentence is wanting." Bede repeated it. "It is finished!" said the writer. "It is finished," repeated the dying saint. "Lift up my head; let me sit in my cell, in the place where I have been accustomed to pray; and now glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." And with this noble utterance his spirit fled.



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## INTRODUCTORY



A NEW and revised edition of this work, which first appeared nine years ago and has had a wide circulation, was suggested by the fact that the International Uniform Sunday School Lessons for the first half of the year 1917 are devoted to the Gospel of John, thus creating a demand for such contributions on the fourth Gospel as shall be profitable to teachers and students of the Bible. This work does not follow the scheme of the International Lessons, but is an independent treatment of the entire Gospel such as the student will find essential to the understanding of its various parts. In the interest of convenience and economy the work is now comprised in a single volume, though the contents have not been reduced, but amplified in many sections.

Much illustrative material which did not appear in the earlier edition will be found in this revision. The author has learned, through his own work as a Bible Class teacher and leader of devotional meetings, that appropriate illustrations are of the utmost value in making the truth vivid to auditors. He is confident that what is given in these pages will quicken the minds of alert readers to produce other illustrations of equal value from their personal observation and general reading.

This book had its genesis in the author's work with his own congregation during a few happy and profitable months. For nearly a year he accompanied them in an analytical, expository, and devotional study of John's

Gospel. The weekly prayer meetings were employed as the most available services in which the congregation could engage in this study. Free discussion was encouraged after the pastor had opened the theme of the evening. Prayer, song, and personal witness contributed to a wholesome midweek service. The meeting always had a definite object, and the lifelessness which is the bane of the improvised service never manifested its depressing influence. The only embarrassment was the difficulty of limiting the meeting in time. The people were urged to commit to memory large portions of the book, and these were frequently recited in unison at the beginning of the service. They were asked to acquire a knowledge of the entire contents of the Gospel, and to be able to present a correct outline of all the movements in the book. As the study advanced there were occasional reviews of the subject-matter. To facilitate the work a syllabus was printed and distributed to those who were willing to use it.

The good effects of what was thus done by one company led the author to believe that other assemblies of Christians might reap equally profitable results from a similar course. Moreover, Bible classes in connection with the Sunday school, and individuals engaged in private study, could pursue with advantage the method herein indicated. This volume contains fifty analytical "Studies," and an equal number of homilies, which usually treat some feature of the passage which has not been particularly emphasized in the analysis. The writer is painfully conscious of the incompleteness and defectiveness of his work, but humbly trusts that what he has done may be blessed of God to the profit of those who are patient enough to read his book.

## FROM THE INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION.



"SHALL we see John Wesley in heaven?" asked one of Whitefield's disciples of his master. "No," was the reply, "for he will be so near the Source of Brightness that we shall not be able to discern him." A similar embarrassment confronts the student of the Fourth Gospel. There are times when the identity of its author seems to be lost in the supernal radiance of his theme, and when for awhile one can not determine whether it is the voice of the Master or that of the disciple which he is hearing. A pedantic young man once said that he had so saturated his mind with the sentiments of Emerson that he was frequently unable to distinguish his own thoughts from those of his favorite philosopher. In the Fourth Gospel, just where Jesus ends and John begins is sometimes an apparently insoluble puzzle. But it need not disturb one's peace, since John is so impregnated by the spirit of Christ that whatever he writes falls into perfect harmony with the character of the Master as He is known to us through the testimony of the other evangelists. Experiments have proven that even metals flow into one another after sufficiently long and intimate association. Wallace affirms that if a cube of lead be placed upon one of gold, the surfaces of contact being very smooth and true, and be permitted to remain in this position for about a month, without pressure and at ordinary temperatures, "a minute quantity of gold will



be found to have permeated through the lead, and can be detected in any part of it." A like intermingling of souls more complete than that of any material substances is witnessed every day in the history of earthly friendships. John was "that disciple whom Jesus loved," and his close companionship with his Master nourished and developed those spiritual susceptibilities which best qualified him to reproduce both the essence and the form of Christ's teachings with remarkable fidelity. He is perhaps our finest example of an inspired writer. He had first of all the advantage of intimate personal association with the Lord. He was comrade to Him in joy and sorrow, in toil and suffering, for three years. He lived with Him, and drank in the spirit of His character and mission. In addition to this gracious privilege, of which he availed himself so sympathetically and intelligently, he became the recipient of that special gift of the Spirit which Jesus promised to His apostles, the benefits of which were felt in an intellectual quickening not less than in spiritual illumination. "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." The personal equation in the Fourth Gospel need not, therefore, give us any disquietude. If the discourses contained in this book seem to us too distinctly Johannine to be the literal speech of Jesus, we must remember that the felicities of the apostle's style are drawn not alone from his native literary genius, but also from his spiritual aptitude to perceive and transmit the mind of Christ. The figure of the Good Shepherd is suggested here and there in the Synoptics, but only John has taken the beautiful imagery which the lips of Jesus pronounced and given it free and elaborate expression. The farewell discourses

were heard by the entire apostolic group, save the traitor, but John alone appears to have possessed the ability to present them in appropriate form. As he has given them they are so true to the spirit of the Master that we are convinced of their genuineness in the very act of reading them. In short, both the intellectual and the spiritual idiosyncrasies of John fitted him admirably to interpret the deeper aspects of Christ's teaching. Tennyson told Phillips Brooks that he wrote his poem on "The Mystic" under the inspiration he derived from reading John's Gospel and the Apocalypse. It was a man of such a temperament only who, impelled by the Holy Spirit, could render into human language the inner truths of Christ's message. This wonderful facility in dealing intelligently with the profoundest themes of our Lord's ministry makes John's Gospel the one book of religion in the whole range of devotional literature best adapted to the needs of universal humanity. The commonest mind sees a clear vision of Christ in this Gospel. However deep the thoughts it conveys, there is nothing vague or indistinct about it. "Tell me if I am ever obscure in my expression," said Charles Kingsley, "and do not fancy that if I am obscure I am therefore deep; . . . for to me an obscurity is a reason for suspecting a fallacy." Lucidity and depth alike characterize the work of John. Though the wayfarer need not stumble at his lines, the philosopher can not hope to exhaust their meaning.

The books of the learned are not indispensable for a profitable study of this sublime Gospel. A spiritual character is the best aid to its interpretation. But in order to ascertain how great minds have been affected by this marvelous piece of writing, and to get an intelligent notion of the vast continents of truth which it embraces,

it is well to examine the best efforts which reverent scholars have made to unfold and display its strength and beauty. The literature which has sprung from these attempts is so prolific that no one can aspire to a complete acquaintance with it. A few books which the author of these "studies" has found of much profit in the performance of his work are mentioned here for the sake of those readers who wish to pursue independent lines of research. Among commentators the works of Westcott, Godet, Reynolds, in the *Pulpit Commentary*; Dods, in the *Expositor's Bible*; Plummer, in the *Cambridge Bible*; McClymont, in the *Century Bible*, are especially valuable. Prof. Riggs, in his little volume on the Gospel of John in the "Messages of the Bible" series, has given a most helpful paraphrase of the Gospel, which is equivalent to a commentary so far as interpretation is concerned. On questions of authorship and historicity, and on various points of criticism, Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, Vol. II, and Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, Vol. I, contain notable articles. Watkins' *Bampton Lectures for 1890*, entitled, "Modern Criticism in Relation to the Fourth Gospel," Sanday's "Authorship and Historical Character of the Fourth Gospel," and the same author's "Criticism of the Fourth Gospel;" Drummond's "Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel;" Scott's "The Fourth Gospel: Its Purpose and Theology," and Wendt's "The Gospel According to John," are worthy of careful study. On doctrinal questions, which are also considered in nearly all the works already mentioned, Stevens' "The Johannine Theology," and Bernard's "The Central Teaching of Jesus Christ" may be consulted with advantage.

# Studies in the Gospel of John.



## I.

### THE AUTHOR.

The son of thunder, the loved of Christ, the pillar of the Churches, who leaned on Jesus' bosom, makes his entrance. He plays no drama, he covers his head with no mask. Yet he wears array of inimitable beauty. For he comes having his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and his loins girt, not with fleece dyed in purple, or bedropped with gold, but woven through and through with, and composed of, truth itself. He will now appear before us. . . . Wherefore, as if we all at once saw one stooping down from yonder heaven, and promising to tell us truly of things there, we should all flock to listen to him, so let us now dispose ourselves. For it is from up there that this man speaks down to us. . . . Seest thou the boldness, and the great authority of his words! How he utters nothing by way of doubtful conjecture, but all demonstratively, as if passing sentence! Very lofty is this apostle, and full of dogmas, and lingers over them more than over other things.—*Chrysostom.*

**Introduction.**—The question of authorship in dispute with special intensity since the eighteenth century. Doubt thrown upon it almost from the beginning. The problem has large importance in determining the value of the book. Some contend that this Gospel would not be impaired by admitting the uncertainty of its authorship. This view is not justified. "The discourses put into the mouth of Jesus, and the conception of His person which is set forth in this book, have for the Church an altogether different value, according as it is the beloved apostle of the Lord who gives us an account of what he

## 2 STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

has seen and heard, or a thinker of the second century who composes all this after his own fancy."—*Godet*. The truth of this assertion is obvious when one observes the essential relation of the contents of the Fourth Gospel to the individuality of the writer, who repeatedly affirms that he is offering personal testimony, in which at the same time he is presenting objective truth. "If the writer was the beloved disciple, an eye-witness possessing a specially intimate knowledge of the mind and character of Jesus, we have an assurance that when, for example, he wrote the opening sentences of the Gospel, he felt himself in touch not merely with current theological thought, but with the historic fact of the consciousness of Jesus of Nazareth."—*Strachan*.

### I. EVIDENCES OF JOHN'S AUTHORSHIP.

Here it is only possible to give these evidences in outline. Detailed statements of them are easily available in many works on the Gospel of John.

- i. **External Evidence.** Accepted by the Church universal as John's in the last third of the second century. These early Christians had more evidence than has reached us. Among the documents ascribing this Gospel to John is the *Muratorian Fragment*, containing the earliest known list of books esteemed canonical (A. D. 150-175). The testimony of Theophilus of Antioch (about 180), Clement of Alexandria (190), Irenæus (173-190) is directly in support of the authorship of John. Much importance is attached to the testimony of Irenæus because he was the disciple of Polycarp, who suffered martyrdom at eighty-six years of age (A. D. 155 or 156), and who used to refer to "the intercourse he had with John and the rest who had seen the Lord." It is presumed that if Polycarp had doubted the authorship of this Gospel, which was widely circulated at the time, he would have so expressed himself, and Irenæus, his pupil, would not have taught that John composed it. The works of Justin Martyr (140-

161), Tertullian (born about 160), Tatian (150-180), and other early writers contain quotations from the Gospel, and evidently assume the authorship of John without question. For full and illuminating discussion of this problem, and also for internal evidence as indicated below, see *Sanday, Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*; *Hastings, Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, Vol. I.*; *Drummond, Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, and various *Introductions*.

2. **Internal Evidence.** Many scholars are agreed that the author must have been—

- (1) *A Jew*, because of his familiarity with Jewish conceptions, points of view, opinions, usages, observances imagery; and also because the arrangement of ideas, structure of sentences, and even the vocabulary of the book are essentially Hebrew.
- (2) *A Jew of Palestine*, because of his intimate acquaintance with the topography of Palestine, and especially of Jerusalem, which was destroyed long before this book appeared. Also shows close knowledge of the historical circumstances of Palestine in the time of Jesus.
- (3) *A contemporary of Jesus and an eye-witness of His deeds*, because he relates these with a vividness and circumstantial precision impossible of invention. Moreover, the author claims to have witnessed what he records. (John i, 14; xix, 35.)
- (4) *An apostle*, because he knows the thoughts of the disciples, and discloses motives, which no writer of fiction would have ascribed to them. He also records the emotions, thoughts, and motives of Jesus.
- (5) *The Apostle John*, because he alone fulfills the requirements of such intimate knowledge of Jesus and His disciples as the author of this book unquestionably had. The writer declares that he is "the disciple whom Jesus loved," to whom Jesus entrusted His mother, and this was none other than John the Evangelist.



## II. THE BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN.

1. **Date and place of birth unknown.** Probably younger than Jesus and the youngest of the disciples. Native of Galilee, lived on the shores of Gennesaret, probably at Bethsaida, though possibly at Capernaum, which was near. The character of the region in the time of Jesus contrasted with present conditions.
2. **Family,** composed of four persons, Zebedee the father, Salome the mother, James the brother, and John. Was Salome the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus? Family in comfortable circumstances. According to Mark i, 20, Zebedee had "hired servants." Salome was among those who ministered to Jesus and the disciples, and accompanied them. (Luke viii, 3; Matt. xxvii, 56.) John evidently had a house of his own. (John xix, 27), into which he received the mother of Jesus after the crucifixion. The business of fishing was lucrative. John and James were partners of Simon. (Luke v, 10.)
3. **John's first appearance.** Attracted southward from Galilee to the ministry of John the Baptist, becomes his disciple. Jesus finds him in John's company. (John i, 35.) Follows Jesus, and with Andrew is invited to the place where Jesus is staying. Andrew summons Peter, and John calls James. (John i, 37-42.)
4. **John's final call to discipleship.** Remained awhile in intercourse with Jesus, who then apparently sends the young men back to their families. John while pursuing his accustomed occupation on the Sea of Galilee is later near Capernaum called to permanent discipleship. (Matt. iv, 18-22, and parallel passages.)
5. **Appointment to the apostleship.** When the disciples became more numerous Jesus chose twelve who were to be apostles. (Luke vi, 12-16; Mark iii, 13, 14.) John stood in the front rank of these.



6. **The inner circle of three.** Peter, James, and John are in an especial sense the confidential friends of Jesus. They alone are admitted to the raising of the ruler's daughter, to the glories of the transfiguration, to the agonizing struggle in Gethsemane.
7. **The disciple whom Jesus loved.** (John xiii, 23; xix, 26; xx, 2; xxi, 7, 20.) This designation the Church fathers recognized, and John claimed. "To disguise his own name under this paraphrase was not to glorify the man; it was to exalt the tenderness of Him who had deigned to stoop so low."—*Godet*. Compare Paul's designation of himself in 2 Cor. xii, 2-5. Perhaps this title was given to John by others before he used it himself. Its propriety is apparent when it is remembered that he uses it almost apologetically, as an explanation of the prominent part he played on several important occasions.
8. **His history associated with that of Jesus until the Ascension.** Always with his Master. The confidential one at the last supper. Follows Jesus to judgment and death. The one apostle who dared to stand beside the cross, and received the mother of Jesus as a farewell charge. (John xviii, 15; xix, 26, 27.) Is at the tomb with Peter on Easter morning. With him in Galilee resuming the old calling, figures conspicuously in the closing episode of this gospel (xxi).
9. **Authentic history after Pentecost.** Fills a position secondary to that of Peter, though usually associated with him. Illustration in Acts iii, 4. Accompanies Peter to Samaria to finish the work begun by Philip. (Acts viii.) On his return to Jerusalem it is uncertain whither he goes. Not there when Paul first visited the city. (Gal. i, 18, 19.) Supposed by some that during this period he was caring for the mother of Jesus, perhaps in his own home. This would explain, it is said, the small part he took in the earliest missionary work of the Church. The Virgin pre-

sumed to have died about 48 A. D., after which John probably assumed a larger share in directing the Christian movement. Twelve or fifteen years after the return from Samaria, and shortly after the supposed date of Mary's death, he was at the Council of Jerusalem, A. D. 50 or 51. (Acts xv.) He is one of the apostles with whom Paul confers, and is ranked by him as one of "the pillars of the Church." (Gal. ii, 9.) How long he remained in Jerusalem and why he left are unknown. The New Testament gives no further information concerning him, except what he records of himself in Rev. i, 9, that he was "in the island called Patmos for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus."

10. **Later traditions.** After the Council of Jerusalem John disappears from view until the time when tradition describes him as fulfilling his apostleship among the Churches of Asia Minor. Probably did not go thither until after the destruction of Jerusalem. Persecution following the martyrdom of Stephen would lessen John's attachment to the city. Doubtless accompanied the Christians emigrating to Perea when the war against the Romans broke out. This departure occurred in 67. At a later period, in consequence of the death of Paul and others, John removed to Asia Minor to assist the Churches thus bereaved. Here was now the heart of Christendom. It was natural that he should establish himself in this territory. It has been suggested that he went to the Parthians when he left Jerusalem, and there is a tradition, supported by Tertullian, that he was at Rome, where he was miraculously preserved from death when placed in a cauldron of boiling oil, but there is no foundation for these assumptions. There is trustworthy evidence, however, of his appearance in Asia Minor and of his residence at Ephesus. Irenæus testifies that he lived there until the time of Trajan. Tradition has it that during some persecutions he was exiled to the island of Patmos. That he was there his own words declare. (Rev. i, 9.)

Domitian is said to have been the Emperor by whom John was banished. This accords with the fact that under this sovereign men were actually exiled for the mere crime of being Christians. Clement, of Alexandria, says that after the death of Domitian, John returned from Patmos to Ephesus, and says of his later years in Asia Minor: "He visited the Churches, instituted bishops and regulated affairs."

11. **The end of his life.** Attained a great age. Jerome says he died about the year 100. Irenæus asserts that he lived until the time of Trajan, that is, until after the year 98. According to Suidas he reached the age of 120 years, which is improbable. If, as has been supposed, he was from 20 to 25 years old when called by Jesus, about the year 30, he was from 90 to 95, about the year 100, three years after the accession of Trajan.
12. **His death.** The idea had been conceived that he would be exempt from death because of what Jesus had said to Peter. (John xxi, 22.) Even his death did not cause this expectation to cease. Tradition that his grave at Ephesus, where Polycrates says he was buried, gave evidence that its occupant was still living, the earth being gently moved by his breathing. Some have even insisted that he was taken up to heaven after the manner of Enoch and Elijah. Tradition, supported by the testimony of Origen, avers that he suffered martyrdom.

### III. THE CHARACTER AND WORK OF JOHN.

1. **Warmth of affection and clearness of intuition,** his leading characteristics morally and intellectually. These would inspire close attachment to Jesus. His loving and sympathetic disposition has been emphasized by artists and writers. But he was a man of force as well as gentleness. Capable of intense moral indignation. Tender love and fierce intolerance blended in his character. Hated evil as fervently as he loved righteousness. With him sin was

not weakness, but wickedness. Ardor in thought, word, love, and hate—this marks the beloved disciple. Sometimes expressed in action that called for rebuke. As knowledge of Christ and the spirit of the gospel deepened, this became less and less frequent.

2. **Intensity of nature leads to excesses.** Three illustrations: (1) Forbids the stranger to cast out devils. (Mark ix, 38; Luke ix, 49.) (2) Wants to call down fire on the Samaritan villagers because of their inhospitable treatment of Jesus. (Luke ix, 54.) (3) Salome as mouthpiece for her sons, John and James, who share her desires, begs Christ to assign them chief places in His kingdom. (Matt. xx, 20; Mark x, 35.)
3. **His work.** Contrasted with that of Peter and Paul. Peter had practical, organizing ability. Paul possessed argumentative, dialectic skill. John differs from both. Could not have laid foundations like Peter, nor contended like Paul. But in closing period of the Apostolic age he contributed immensely toward completing the development of the primitive Church.
4. **His writings.** Three epistles bear his name. He is the author of the Apocalypse. These works—together with the gospel—reveal the man. John finds in Jesus the center of thought. His is an unique mind. He is unlike any of the other apostles. He is a man of vision. He broods over the facts on which he has fastened attention, and then soars into heights of inspiring thought. The other evangelists had the same deeds of Christ before them, and they record many of them. They do nothing more. John chooses a few of these events which are best adapted in his view to serve his purpose, which is to influence men to believe in Christ. These he penetrates with his wonderful insight, and from them presents a picture of the Master which is the most satisfactory, as it is undoubtedly the most accurate, of all the

portraits made by the contemporaries of Jesus. In doing this he unconsciously draws a picture of himself, in which one sees reflected the image of the Lord.

### The Beloved Disciple.

*"That disciple whom Jesus loved."*—JOHN XXI, 7.

John Constable, the English painter who is often called the founder of the modern school of landscape art, was once asked by a patron to put his signature to one of his paintings. His reply was, "Why, my dear sir, it is signed all over!" So original and revolutionary was the style of his painting that it could not be mistaken for that of another. This individuality differentiates all artists whose work has enduring value. A collection of pen and ink sketches by Thackeray found ready purchasers in London, though they bore no monogram or signature. Their genuineness could not be questioned. The Fourth Gospel contains no autographic mark of its author, but "it is signed all over." The character of its writer speaks in every line. As if to dissipate every doubt he designates himself as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." The author was a comrade whom the Master cherished with a singular affection.

Lord Brooke directed that his tomb should be inscribed with the words, "Friend to Sir Philip Sidney." John the Evangelist claimed for himself the rarer distinction of "That disciple whom Jesus loved." His fame would have been secure if he had rested it solely upon his writings, for it is plain that only the most gifted mind could have produced them. But the beautiful title which he appropriated to himself is a chaplet of unfading glory. Seneca once told a courtier that he had no reason to mourn for the loss of his son or anything else, since Cæsar was his friend. John esteemed his confidential relations with Jesus recompense enough for the sacrifice of a lifetime.

Napoleon Bonaparte, with his own hands, placed the

imperial crown upon his head, not even suffering the pope to do it for him. John with his own pen affixed this noble designation to himself, though we may assume that it was conceded to him as his right by the other disciples. Indeed, it may have been assigned to him by his comrades long before he ventured to apply it to himself. In any case it is a modest periphrasis to avoid the undue use of the pronoun of the first person by one who was constantly describing events of which he was an eye-witness. It denotes diffidence rather than arrogance. It clearly shows John's consciousness of the amazing condescension of Jesus in admitting him to the secret sanctuary of His personal affection. Moreover, it enables him to explain how he could know the motives, emotions, thoughts, and impulses of Jesus so familiarly. Often he reveals acquaintance with the inmost mind of Jesus. The mystery of his possessing this knowledge is solved when it is known that he is "that disciple whom Jesus loved."

What matters it how the title came to him, if it is justified by the recognized relations of John to Jesus? Was not he of the sacred triumvirate who witnessed the most divine acts of Jesus? Did not he behold the celestial splendors of the Transfiguration? Did not he enter the shadows of Gethsemane with the Master? Did not he recline on the bosom of Jesus at the Last Supper? Did not Jesus show him marks of unusual considerateness and affection at the interview by the lakeside after the resurrection? Above all, did not the Master commit His own mother to the care of John, as He turned His dying glance upon the weeping group around the Cross? Could there be any higher token of confidence and love?



It is written of Jesus by John himself that, "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end," or "to the uttermost"—every one of them. Yet He left the impression on John that there was one disciple whom He loved more fondly than any other. Could John be deceived? Could the Lord who loved all



men enough to die for them have a stronger passion for one than for another? Let the mother who has many children answer—not in public, but in the silence of her soul. What a miracle is wrapped up in that word “love!” What an infinity of power in it! What a variety of expression without conflict! A man loves his mother, his wife, his child, his country, his God—each of them with all his heart, yet differently in every instance, and without competition or rivalry, and one of them more than all. It is the supreme paradox of life. Jesus illustrated it in His relation to John. When Jonathan Edwards was dying he bade farewell to his friends and family who were about his bedside, and then said, “Now, where is Jesus of Nazareth, my true and never failing friend?” He did not love his household less; he loved his Savior more.

Did Jesus love Judas Iscariot? There can be no doubt of it. It was He who said, “Love your enemies.” He did not say, “*Like* your enemies.” He never commands impossibilities. There are two words in the New Testament for “love.” One of them denotes that exalted spiritual passion which Paul celebrates in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. It is this term which Jesus uses when He bids us love our enemies. There is another word which is warmer, but less exalted. It expresses more precisely a natural affection based on instinctive affinities. Jesus could employ both of these terms with John. He could use only one of them with Judas Iscariot. He loved the latter, but He did not *like* him.

A friend said of Thoreau: “I love Henry, but I can not like him; and as for taking his arm, I should as soon think of taking the arm of an elm-tree.” The devout Christian realizes that he must love every soul of man, or prove false to his religion. He knows also that he can not like those persons who are foreign to his spirit. Jesus loved John in all the ways it is possible for us to conceive of love subsisting between two holy men.



There was a certain refinement of mind and spirit in John which commanded the love of Jesus. This is evinced in his writings. It is a blunder to speak of John as "a rude fisherman." He possessed an unusually quick intelligence. We have had learned blacksmiths, like Elihu Burritt, who acquired an almost incredible number of languages while laboring at his forge; scholarly shoemakers, like Samuel Drew, who produced two notable books on profound subjects while he was engaged at the cobbler's bench, and was honored with a degree from a great university; erudite artisans in many fields of inquiry. There is no reason to suppose a fisherman in Galilee must needs be intellectually deficient. John certainly had a mind of marvelous acuteness. The other disciples saw the outer vesture of Christ's life; He looked through the events into the heart of things. He was an idealist. He was a mystic. He was a poet. He had vision. He describes what he beheld as no other apostle could do.

Deep intellectual insight was united to a beautiful delicacy of sentiment in his composition. The very use of the phrase by which he characterizes himself—"that disciple whom Jesus loved"—is proof of it. He was a man of candor, warmth, feeling, affection. A lovable man was he. His contemplative spirit, his meditative habit, his far-seeing mind would inevitably captivate the supreme intellect in history. His sweet brotherliness, his genius for comradeship, his power to creep into every fold of a friend's nature would charm the greatest heart in the world. Jesus loved him by the compulsion of the man's character.



There was a certain ardor of temperament in John which drew him to Jesus. He must not be conceived as a soft, unduly gentle, almost effeminate man. The artists have wronged him in this respect. Who told them that love belongs only to the weak? John was a virile, muscular, warm-blooded saint. Indeed, he seems like no saint at all when we remember how he forbade a man to cast out devils because he did not train in Christ's com-

pany, how he yearned to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans who would not entertain Jesus, and how he readily acquiesced in his mother's ambitious request that her sons should have the best places in the new kingdom. But all this reveals a nature of intensity, and gives reasonableness to the term applied to John and James—Boanerges, "Sons of Thunder."

Tradition has it that, long after John had become the greatest figure in the Christian Church of Asia Minor, going one day to bathe at Ephesus, and finding Cerinthus, the heretic, within, he rushed out without bathing, crying: "Let us flee, lest even the bath-house fall upon us, for Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within." The story may be fictitious, but it harmonizes with John's known hatred of falsehood, and with his ardor of soul, and shows him to have been anything but a bloodless man.

One day when he was preaching in a certain town near Ephesus he was attracted by the appearance of a young man in his audience, and on his departure particularly recommended him to the bishop of the place, who took him home and trained him for baptism. Later the youth fell into evil practices and finally renounced his faith, and became the captain of a band of robbers. When John returned to the town and asked, "Where is the pledge entrusted to you by Christ and me?" the bishop replied, "He is dead—dead to God," and rehearsed the sad story of his fall. Then the apostle obtained a horse, and set off for the headquarters of the bandits. He was captured by one of the robbers, and carried to their captain, who recognizing his prisoner was about to flee. But John held him, reasoned with him, prayed with him, and finally brought the prodigal to penitence and renewed fellowship with the Church. Such an evangelist must have had an enthusiastic nature.

This would endear him to Jesus, whose own enthusiasm was so consuming that it constrained him to work without food or rest, until his own kinsmen declared he was beside himself. It is well to remember that if we desire the special favor of Jesus we must be earnestness personified.

Another element in John's character which doubtless made him attractive to Jesus was his ability to understand the Master and to sympathize with His point of view. Peter was always blundering. Thomas was always doubting. Philip was always questioning. The majority were painfully obtuse. But John appears to have understood the Lord with singular sagacity. He was deeply drawn to the ideals of Jesus. He gravitated naturally to the Master's position.

Says Stalker: "Of two friends of Alexander the Great the historian Plutarch calls one Philo-Basileus—that is, the friend of the king; and the other Philo-Alexandros—that is, the friend of Alexander. Similarly some one has said St. Peter was Philo-Christos, the friend of the Christ; but St. John was Philo-Jesus, the friend of Jesus. This touches the quick: Peter was attached to the person who filled the office of Messiah, John to the person Himself. And this is a distinction which marks different types of Christian piety in all ages." We know that John was devoted to Jesus because he loved Him as a man, but we also know that John was mastered by the conviction that Jesus was the Son of God, a fact that very slowly penetrated the minds of the other disciples. We all feel an affection for any one who understands us in a world where misrepresentation flourishes, and John's sympathetic appreciation of Jesus was very grateful to the Master. This, too, will account for the steadfastness of John, who showed greater loyalty to Jesus than any other disciple; for when all had forsaken Him and fled, John recovered immediately from panic, and hastened after his Lord to the palace of the high priest, and passed within before the gate was shut. It is a fair presumption from the narrative that in all the subsequent events of the Master's experience up to the moment of His death John was at hand, and we know how early he came to the tomb of Christ on the day of resurrection. Well sings Emerson:

"A ruddy drop of manly blood  
The surging sea outweighs,  
The world uncertain comes and goes;  
The lover rooted stays.

John responded to Jesus as no other apostle seems to have done. He was what Christ made him. He discerned what Jesus was always trying to teach His disciples—that love is the essence of religion. John is the only evangelist who records that final series of discourses in which Jesus repeatedly emphasizes the necessity for His followers to love one another. In his first Epistle, which is a kind of guide-book to his Gospel, he brings out the office of love with remarkable clearness. So fully did he enter into the mind of Jesus in this respect, and in other particulars of his teaching, that the reader of his Gospel is often puzzled to know whether John is recording the words of Jesus, or speaking in his own language.

Jerome's familiar story is to the point. Toward the very end of the apostle's life, when he was so infirm that he had to be carried to the church, and was too weak to preach, he would content himself with simply saying, "Little children, love one another." And when his auditors would inquire, "Master, why dost thou always say this?" he would reply, "It is the Lord's command, and if this alone is done it is enough."

Aristotle being asked what is a friend, replied, "One soul in two bodies." As nearly as one human being can absorb and express another, John became the *alter ego* of Jesus. Love has been called a species of self-flattery, because we love those persons who in some inscrutable way reflect our own souls. We may reverently say that Jesus fondly cherished John because in him, as in a mirror, he saw his own image reproduced.

Giotto has delineated St. John in a notable fresco at Padua. "The form of the ascending saint is made visible through a reticulation of rays of light in colors as splendid as ever came from mortal pencil; but the rays issue entirely from the Savior, whose face and form are full before him." It is a faithful portrait of "that disciple whom Jesus loved."

## II.

### THE GOSPEL.

That little book is a still deeper sea, in which the sun and stars are mirrored, and if there are eternal truths (and such there are) for the human race, they are found in the Gospel of John.—*Herder*.

1. Its greatness as a composition. Sometimes called the "Gospel of Eternity." Also the "Gospel of Love." So important to the Christian faith that it has been the object of constant assault by those who seek the overthrow of evangelical religion. Its importance can scarcely be overstated, though it may be *incorrectly* stated. When Lessing declares that, by teaching a loftier conception of the person of Christ than had hitherto been held, John saved Christianity, which without his help would have disappeared as a Jewish sect, he ignores the fact that Paul had completed his mission to the Gentiles before the publication of the Fourth Gospel, and that in Ephesus, where it was produced, the Pauline conception of the person of Christ, which is not less lofty than the Johannine, had already attained a central position in the tenets of the Christian Church.
2. The problem of John's ability to write it. How could a fisherman of Galilee acquire such profound wisdom as this work exhibits? Consider that this book has endured nearly two thousand years, and seems more valuable now than ever. (1) Too much stress must not be placed on the declaration in Acts iv, 13, that Peter and John were "unlearned and ignorant men," a phrase which serves chiefly to mark their separation from the professionally learned

classes. There was no incompatibility between the position of a hand-worker and the possession of a fair measure of Hebrew culture. Moreover, (2) John is an example of native genius. History full of such instances: Bunyan, Shakespeare, Lincoln, the early Greek philosophers, whose intellectual powers were unaided by scientific appliances and modern opportunities for investigation. (3) John's mind brought into intimate contact with the mind of Jesus. The greatest intellect of the race would inflame the soul of a thinker like John through the mere power of association. (4) The added fact of divine inspiration for a great purpose. Consider illustrations of this in the Old Testament, including that of Bezaleel. (Exod. xxxi, 2-5.)

3. **Where and when written.** At Ephesus, in Asia Minor, as seems certain. Long after the other gospels had appeared. Some time before A. D. 125, because Basileides, who quotes it, wrote about that date. Somewhere between 80 and 95 A. D. scholars agree. When the writer had reached maturity. If at an earlier period, would have been a different book in form and essence. The author is evidently an old man looking back. (vii, 39; xxi, 19.) Shows a marked development of doctrine, when compared with the other gospels. Has been conjectured that the first twenty chapters were written some time before the gospel was published, the last chapter being added at a later period, and the whole then given to the Church. The ripe fruit of long thought. Evidence that it is an old man's book in the particularity with which small things are noticed. Illustrations: descriptions of the Wedding at Cana, the Draught of Fishes, the Feeding of Five Thousand.

4. **Occasion of its composition.** Evidence to show that the gospel was written at the request of disciples and elders in Asia Minor, perhaps to preserve in permanent form John's oral gospel delivered in their hearing from time to time. This supposition confirmed



by the testimony of the *Muratorian Fragment*, Clement of Alexandria, Jerome, and others. Eusebius says: "The apostle being urged, it is said, by his friends, wrote the things which the first evangelists had omitted." Possibly the differences between John's oral gospel and the records of the other evangelists led to this request.

5. **Aims of the Gospel.** Several have been suggested:
  - (1) Instruction of the Church. Historical and practical, as intimated by the *Muratorian Fragment*, which declares that John related the narrative; the other apostles present reviewed, criticised, revised.
  - (2) To supplement the accounts of the other evangelists. So Eusebius asserts. This illustrated by the following facts: John devotes himself largely to the Judæan ministry, the other writers confining themselves almost wholly to the work in Galilee; John commemorates the interviews of Jesus with individuals, the others describe more fully His life in public; John deals with the spiritual import of Christ's life, the others attend more largely to the external features of His career. It is from John that we learn that the public ministry of Jesus lasted three years, whereas from the Synoptists we should have inferred that it covered but one year.
  - (3) To refute heretical teachings. This is the claim of Irenæus and Jerome. He lived in a region infested with false teachers. Doubtless his righteous soul was vexed.
  - (4) To confirm and strengthen the faith of the Church in the Messiahship and Divinity of Jesus Christ. Apparently intended first for believers, who required to be enriched and developed. But also adapted to convince both Jews and Gentiles, who were open-minded.
  - (5) To bring men to eternal life. This is the supreme aim, as declared by John himself. "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." (John xx, 31.) In pursuance of this object he did



write a life of Christ from one point of view; he did supplement the Synopists, though this was not his main purpose; he did refute errors, though this was not his chief aim; he wrote to convince, from his own experience and observation, that Jesus is the Christ of God, and that faith in Him brings eternal life.

6. **Characteristics of the Gospel.** In accomplishing this purpose John pursues an eclectic method. He chooses those facts in Christ's life, and employs those sayings of the Master which he believes are best calculated to serve his end. (1) **Omissions.** Does not avail himself of all the materials at his disposal. "Many other signs truly did Jesus . . . but these are written," etc. (John xx, 30, 31.) No parables, unless the allegories of the good shepherd and the vine can be so regarded. No genealogy, infancy, youth, or anything in the first thirty years of our Lord's life. Baptism, temptation, transfiguration omitted. Sermon on the Mount, Lord's Prayer, Lord's Supper, agony in Gethsemane, ascension not mentioned. No proverbs, or stories about children, scribes, lepers, demons, publicans. (2) **Additions.** Certain striking incidents: wedding at Cana, interviews with Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria, healing the nobleman's son and the man born blind, raising of Lazarus; certain wonderful discourses such as that on the bread of life, the farewell addresses, the priestly prayer on the last night. (3) **Arrangement of matter.** Announces his theme in the prologue (i, 1-18) and proceeds to use his materials with this scheme in constant view. Scenes from the life of Christ are produced in order to lead to a cumulative effect in the end, similar to that in the experience of Thomas, who cries at last, "My Lord and my God!" Shows final results in belief or unbelief, according as men accept or reject Him. (4) **Artistic elements.** Fine literary form. Great variety. "Alternation of incident and interlude, of

story and sermon, of action and discourse." A rare balancing of incidents. Examples: the wedding at Cana—lightsome and festive—over against the cleansing of the temple—stern and dark; the conversation with Nicodemus—a reputable man, at night, over against the conversation with the Samaritan woman—a disreputable person, at full noon-day. By reason of this skill the interest never flags.

(5) **Dramatic movement.** The catastrophe intimated at the beginning. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." (John i, 11.)

Plot develops slowly, but surely. Action confined chiefly to Judæa, and much of it to the doomed city of Jerusalem. Clouds continue to gather until the storm breaks. Twofold climax: Belief develops into conviction of Christ's divinity; unbelief ripens into murder. (6) **Portrait of Jesus.** Presents the Lord as He appeared to him. Wishes others to see Him in the same fashion. Does not write a detailed biography. Others have attempted this with varied success. He will let Jesus talk and act for Himself. A divine beauty thus irradiated from the narratives. The unbroken union of Christ with His Father displayed in his gospel. "The heavenly element which forms the *background* of the first three gospels is the *atmosphere* of the fourth."—*Plummer*. Hence a much larger proportion of the words of Christ in this gospel. Discourses play a very important part, especially in the latter half. In John's work the difference between a photograph and a portrait is well illustrated. (7) **The theologian's gospel.** John not so much the missionary, though he was an ardent evangelist, nor the expositor of prophecy, though he was doubtless an earnest and effective preacher; but he was essentially a theologian, mastering the secrets of the higher life, and seeking to destroy error by building up the truth. (8) **A book of devotion.**

The more it is read the more deeply it will be cherished by the devout Christian, for it reveals what it contains—the mind of the Lord.

7. **Plan of the Gospel.** A truly philosophical work. The product of long reflection under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The character and words of Jesus are given with a single purpose. From beginning to end the manifestation of Christ's divine glory is portrayed, and the results of these several displays are indicated in increasing belief on the part of Christ's disciples, and increasing unbelief on the part of Christ's enemies. The plan coheres about this central theme—the exhibition of Christ's glory; the demonstration of Christ's divinity.
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### General Outline.

Prologue or Introduction. (i, 1-18.)

#### PART ONE.

Manifestation of Christ's Glory Through Works and Words Connected with His Public Ministry. (i, 19—xii.)

- I. Introductory Period: Initial Testimonies. (i, 19-51.)
- II. Period of Undisturbed Activity. (ii—iv.)
- III. Period of Conflict. (iv—xi.)
- IV. Period of Transition and Judgment. (xii.)

#### PART TWO.

Manifestation of Christ's Glory Through Works and Words Connected with His Passion. (xiii—xx.)

- I. The Inner Manifestation by Example and Precept. (xiii—xvii.)
- II. The Outer Manifestation by Suffering and Death. (xviii, xix.)
- III. The Triumphant Manifestation by Resurrection. (xx.)

The Epilogue. (xxi.)

### Expert Testimony.

*"He that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe."*

—JOHN xix, 35.

This Gospel was written by the last man who could say, "I have seen the Lord!" We come very near to him through a letter which Irenæus wrote to Florinus, his old school-fellow, who had lapsed into heresy the latter part of the second century. He speaks of their relations to Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, their former master, who at eighty-six years of age had suffered martyrdom about A. D. 155. "I can tell," he writes, "the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings out, and his comings in, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words. And whatsoever things he had heard from them about the Lord, and about His miracles, and about His teaching, Polycarp, as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures." Thus John told Polycarp, and Polycarp told Irenæus, and Irenæus transmitted to his successors direct information concerning the Christ.

John speaks always with singular emphasis. "He knoweth that he saith true." In his First Epistle, which is a companion work to his Gospel, he leads off with these words: "That . . . which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us. . . . And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." There are thirty instances in which the verb "to know" is employed in this one short document; and many other passages in which an equivalent is used. John was no

agnostic. Compare for illustrations, 1 John ii, 3; iii, 2; iii, 16; v, 15; v, 20. The conviction with which such a man speaks predisposes us to believe his testimony.



The character of John as revealed in his works determines his worth as a witness. Says Bishop Alexander: "He has left the Church three pictures that can never fade—in the Gospel the picture of Christ, in the Epistles the picture of his own soul, in the Apocalypse the picture of Heaven." In the portrait of himself we have depicted a pure-hearted man believing in Jesus Christ with all his soul, and writing the things which he is positive occurred in just the way he describes them. His Gospel is no idealization; it is not an illustration of what Jesus might be supposed to have said and done on the presumption that He was what He claimed to be, but what the Master actually did say and do under the precise circumstances given.

A tradition recited by Tertullian, who was born a few years after John died, shows with what stern veneration for veracity the Apostle was credited by his contemporaries. It seems that a presbyter of Asia Minor confessed that he was the author of an apocryphal work known as the "Acts of Paul and Thecla." It does not appear that the writer had any other motive than to glorify the memory of Paul by a piece of romantic, imaginative literature. But John deposed him from the ministry without hesitation, so profound was his hatred for anything which savored of untruth. It is inconceivable that a man with such a temper for reality could have foisted an invention upon his disciples; for "the offense of the Asiatic presbyter would have been light indeed compared with that of the mendacious Evangelist who could have deliberately fabricated discourses and narrated miracles which he dared to attribute to the Incarnate Son of God."



The difficulties of invention are almost insurmountable, in view of the exalted character of the Person whose

acts and words are described in the Gospels. The finger of forgery betrays itself in every attempt to manufacture language or situations for Jesus. Take this palpable invention which has passed down to us with the name of Papias attached to it: Some contemporaries of John declared that they had heard him say that Jesus was wont to affirm, "The days will come in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand stems, and on each stem ten thousand branches, and on each branch ten thousand shoots, and on each shoot ten thousand clusters, and on each cluster ten thousand grapes, and each grape when pressed shall give twenty-five firkins of wine. And when any saint shall have seized one cluster, another shall cry, I am a better cluster, take me; through me bless the Lord." There is much more of this paltry stuff, all impressively false to the simplicity and reserve of Jesus as portrayed in the Gospels. General Lew Wallace soon found, upon gathering his material for "Ben Hur," that it would be utterly impossible to employ any other than the words of Scripture, if he introduced Jesus as speaking in any part of his narrative, and the Master appears but little as a direct participant in the action of his book. This was not only a triumph of art, but a limitation enforced by the sublime character of Jesus. Only the constant companion of the Master, who had caught the very spirit of Jesus, and who remembered His exact words, could have produced the Fourth Gospel.



The most pregnant sayings of Jesus, and especially those which are paradoxical and epigrammatic, any acute mind would be likely to remember. But the men who recorded the teachings of Jesus were aided by that divine inspiration which had been guaranteed them by their Lord. "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

There is a very beautiful legend about the composition of this Gospel which, however lacking in historical verity, expresses in an imaginative way the unquestionable fact



that this great work was the product of prayer and meditation. The Apostle was about to leave Patmos for Ephesus—so the story runs—and the Christians of the island entreated him to place in writing an account of the Incarnation, and the marvelous life of the Son of God. Then John in company with some chosen friends withdrew from the haunts of men about a mile, and in a sequestered place known as the gorge of Rest he remained for a little time, and then ascended the mountain which rose above it. There he tarried for three days; at the expiration of which time he commanded Prochorus to descend into the town for paper and ink. After two days this comrade found him rapt in prayer standing alone. The Apostle said, "Take the ink and paper, and stand on my right hand." Prochorus did so, and there was a great lightning and thunder, so that the mountain shook, and Prochorus fell to the ground as if dead. Whereupon John stretched forth his hand and took hold of the man, and said, "Stand up at this spot at my right hand. Then he prayed again, and after his prayer said to his companion, "Son Prochorus, what thou hearest from my lips write upon the sheets." And having opened his mouth, as he was standing praying, and looking up to Heaven, he began to say: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And so following on he spake in order, standing as he was, and Prochorus wrote sitting on his right.

Stalker recalls a picture which he saw from the pencil of one of the old masters, in which John is represented as having just written the first words of the Prologue, "when he pauses and lays down the pen, gazing awe-struck at the characters which express a meaning far beyond his own powers of comprehension." Fanciful as are such delineations, they indicate a widely prevalent conviction that the Gospel of John is too sublime a thing to have been made without direct divine interposition.



"We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true"—writes John in his first Epistle. That is the fact



to which the Apostle bears witness. He says in effect: "We looked long for God in earth and sky and sea. At last He came, unveiling Himself in the figure of Jesus Christ. There could be no deceit about the appearance. We saw, we heard, we handled. He remained in the world long enough to vindicate His claim. Then, slain in the body, He rose from the dead. After a sufficient period to prove that it was He and not a phantom, He ascended to the Majesty on high. In Him we saw God. And, while we perceived omnipotence in His works, and omniscience in His wisdom, we saw something else of which no philosophy ever dreamed—His love. This He revealed in acts of mercy, but especially in His voluntary sacrifice for our sins. 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us.' Not only so, but He has set us in the right angle to know God. He has given us an understanding. His love has illumined our minds. We know that we know His character. In this atmosphere of love which He has created, we know Him that is true."

The man's positiveness is inspiring. His godly life is convincing. His character is the best proof that he has seen God. He reminds us of the certitude of Diogenes, who when he heard Zeno attempting with subtle reasonings to prove there was no motion, suddenly started walking. When Zeno inquired the cause, he replied, "Hereby I confute you, and prove there is motion." The evidence of the Fourth Gospel's credibility is in the pure soul of him whose image is reflected from its every page. The man who made that book was incapable of falsehood. And his motive was too serious for any but a sincere spirit to adopt. He is eager to bring his readers to eternal life. "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name."

## THE PROLOGUE.

### CHAPTER I. 1-18.

The Fourth Gospel is like one of those great Egyptian temples which we may see to this day at Dendera, or Edfu, or Karnak—and we remember that the Temple on Mount Zion itself was of the same general type—the sanctuary proper is approached through a pylon, a massive structure overtopping it in height and outflanking it on both sides. The pylon of the Fourth Gospel is, of course, the Prologue.—SANDAY.



### III.

## THE PROLOGUE OR INTRODUCTION.

### CHAPTER I. 1-18.

The gospel of the Son of Thunder opens with a peal.  
—*Plummer.*

**The Prologue** (i, 1-18) is a wonderful piece of writing. Compare with introductions to the other gospels. Matthew written primarily for Jews; hence opens with a genealogical table calculated to establish the Messianic claims of Jesus. Mark consists of memorials intended to present to the Roman mind the personality and power of Jesus. Opens with the heralding of John the Baptist. Luke undertakes a formal history, and announces at the outset his aims, sources, and method, accompanied by a genealogy. John omits all such considerations. He begins with eternity; he will portray the divine Christ.

**The purpose of the Prologue is obvious.** Has been compared to the overture of an oratorio which "causes all the principal themes to be sounded which will be developed in the sequel of the work, and forms thus a prelude to the entire piece." The Prologue is a true introduction, summarizing in effect the entire gospel. It has been called the great gate into the gospel, with three doorways: the first (1-5), theological; the second (6-13), historical; the third (14-18), the doorway of experience. The whole is a rational conviction obtained from a close observation of the facts in the life of Christ.

**The Prologue** contains three great dominant ideas: (1) The Son of God in His eternal being as creator of the universe, and the life and light of men. (2) The

revelation of the Son of God to men, and their manner of receiving Him. (3) The perfect disclosure of God the Father through the incarnation of the Son, as attested by personal experience. These three ideas will be found throughout the entire gospel.

# I. THE SON OF GOD IN HIS ETERNAL BEING. (1-5.)

1. **Called the Word (Logos).** Term introduced without explanation. It is assumed that readers are familiar with it. A term in current use. Not easily understood by persons unacquainted with its history. Critics have charged that John took it from Philo, a Jewish philosopher, of Alexandria, who died about ten years after the crucifixion of Jesus. His doctrines were a mixture of Mosaic religion and Greek philosophy. John would not be discredited if this accusation were proven, for Philo's views were based, not only on the teachings of Plato and the Stoics, but also on the Old Testament and the later Hebrew theology. He was himself a devout Jew, who held that Greek philosophy was divinely inspired as well as the Scriptures. Whether Philo derived his doctrine of the Logos (Word) from the Old Testament in the first instance, or from Plato, is not known, though the presumption is that he got it from the former, in view of his early religious training as a Jew. Whether John was acquainted with the writings of Philo or not, he would find the doctrine of the Logos (Word) suggested, if not actually taught, in the ancient Scriptures. "The word of Jehovah" is a phrase often used in the Old Testament, and frequently with the idea of personification. There were also Targums, or paraphrases of the Old Testament books, in common use in his day, with which John and his disciples were doubtless familiar, in which "the word of God" was personified, and to it were attributed divine power and wisdom, in order more completely to separate God from the world. Example: Adam and Eve are represented as hearing the voice of "the word of the Lord," and

"the word of the Lord" calls unto Adam. (Gen. iii, 8, 9.) This phraseology illustrates the hesitancy of the Jews to speak of God as acting directly upon the world. This disposition was still more marked in a Jew who had been tinged with Greek philosophy, like Philo, who held the most abstract ideas of God's nature. The chasm between the transcendent Deity and the lower world must be bridged by the theory of intermediate powers or ideas, and the sum of these was the Logos (Word). Some writers claim that John derived the suggestion for his doctrine of the Word (Logos) from the Targums entirely. Others hold that he obtained it from both these and the writings of Philo. The question is not one of great practical moment. The idea was current in theological literature for at least two centuries before he wrote his gospel. He simply adopted a term of common use in philosophical speech, in order by employing it to adapt the idea of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ to the minds of his Greek readers. It is given a new character, however, when used by John. "The personification of the divine word in the Old Testament is poetical; in Philo metaphysical; in Saint John historical." It is a fact of observation and experience in the conception of John. A very apt method of indicating the manifested God both to Jews and to pagans, in view of the difficulty, which all feel, of perceiving how the infinite Spirit can disclose Himself to the finite mind. The Word of God is that by which He utters Himself, has communication with other beings, deals with them, expresses His power, intelligence, and will. What a perfect title for the Son of God, "who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power," is the full utterance of the invisible and eternal God to the souls of men.

2. **Affirmations concerning the Word (Logos).** Five notable ascriptions are made: (a) Eternity of existence in verse 1. (b) Eternal fellowship with God,

in verses 1, 2. (*c*) Identity with God, in verse 1. (*d*) Creator of the universe, in verse 3. (*e*) Light and life of men, in verse 4. It is impossible to read these sentences without being reminded of the first words of Genesis. The doctrine herein enunciated is that of the New Testament generally concerning the person of Christ. Compare Col. i, 16, 17; Heb. i, 1-3; xi, 3. Christ is represented in this Prologue as the source from which every form of life—physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, eternal—proceeds. Observe how John's ideas flow into one another. "Creation leads on to life, and life leads on to light. Without life creation would be unintelligible; without light all but the lowest forms of life would be impossible."

## II. THE REVELATION OF THE SON OF GOD TO MEN; THEIR MANNER OF RECEIVING HIM. (5-13.)

The Word (*Logos*) is here spoken of as Light. Appeared and was adequately attested. Unbelief rejected Him; belief welcomed Him. The Light shone in the darkness, but the darkness could not apprehend Him. Though the Word is the spiritual light in every man, man's sin (darkness) made it impossible for him to see. "The eternal Son is the universal Sun."

1. **John the Baptist testified of Him.** (6-8.) Personal testimony to the truth is one of John's favorite ideas. Inseparable from the idea of belief in the truth. "A reason for the hope." Necessary to state that John the Baptist was not the true light, in view of the fact that at Ephesus, where this gospel was written, Paul found disciples depending wholly upon John's baptism. (Acts xix, 1-6.)
2. **He was ever active in the world, but the world failed to recognize Him.** (10.) A tragic tone. He made the world. He was in the world; yet the world did not know Him. The Creator came and was not recognized. The Græco-Roman world



was unconscious of the nearness of God. "They registered His birth, took account of Him as one to be taxed, but were as little aware as the oxen with whom He shared His first sleeping-place that this was God."

3. **He came to His own in the flesh, but they rejected Him.** (11.) Tragic note repeated. Compare the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. (Matt. xxi, 33-41.) This has been called "the saddest verse in the Bible."
4. **Some did receive Him, and entered into a new life.** (12, 13.) Always two general classes of persons respecting the claims of Jesus. "There was a division of the people." His wonderful works, His wonderful words, His wonderful character provoked opposite results. "Power to become the sons of God" means authority, right, liberty. Man is born with the *capacity* to become a son of God. Christ gives him the *right*. Christ is from all eternity the Son of God; men are qualified to become the sons of God by divine grace. No natural process in regeneration. Three times John asserts it. "Born, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

### III. THE DISCLOSURE OF GOD THE FATHER THROUGH THE INCARNATION AS ATTESTED BY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. (14-18.)

1. **Humiliation.** (14.) The Word (Logos) existing from all eternity with the Father (1, 2) not only manifested His power in creation (3), and in influence on the minds of men (9, 12, 13), but also exhibited Himself in the form of flesh. The Creator became a creature.
2. **Glorification.** (14.) In His very humiliation His glory was manifest. "We beheld." Possible reference to the transfiguration (Luke ix, 32; 2 Peter i, 17, 18), and to the opening vision of the Apocalypse. His glory always apparent to John, who was a seer,

a man of vision. "Full of grace and truth." Comeliness, winsomeness, kindliness, good-will, favor. "We beheld." Gazed upon Him as an astronomer upon the starry heavens. His glory was perfectly obvious to the believer. "To the unbeliever he was a bankrupt Galilean; to the believer he was the embodied might of God." Christ the beauty, the majesty, the power, the wisdom of God.

3. **Testimony.** (15, 16.) John the Baptist made a great impression on John the Evangelist. Three times in a few verses he records the proclamation which created such an epoch in his own life. As soon as Jesus appeared, the forerunner began to disappear. The testimony of John the Baptist is confirmed by believers. "Of His fullness have all we received."
4. **Summary of the purpose of the Incarnation.** (18.) "A visible revelation of the invisible God." God's response to the craving of men to see, know, and understand Him. God revealed in a personal way, by a personal medium. Lessons of the Incarnation: (1) God is not alienated from us, but identified with us. (2) As Christ's love became incarnate, so the Christian's love must be embodied in living deeds.

#### Note.

Many great terms of the Gospel are anticipated in the Prologue, which not only presents in outline what is to be developed in the body of the gospel, but also contains certain key-words and their cognates, which are repeated frequently in the subsequent chapters. John has been accused of poverty of style, because of his constant repetition of terms. But this is not a serious accusation, for his words thus repeated do not represent abstract notions, but "powerful spiritual realities." They have been compared to "pieces of gold with which great lords make payments." Many of these are in the Prologue, and occur again in the body of the book. They indicate threads of thought which are woven throughout the entire texture. Examples follow:

**Life.** (4.) With its cognate, to **live**, occurs 52 times.

**Light.** (4, 5, 7, 8, 9.) Occurs 23 times.

**Witness.** (**Testimony**, **testify**, same root)—(7) is found 47 times.

**Believe.** (7, 12.) Great word with John. Testimony induces men to believe. Belief leads to eternal life. Used 98 times.

**Know.** (10.) Occurs 55 times.

**World.** (9, 10.) Used 78 times.

**Name.** (12.) Occurs 25 times.

**Glory.** (14.) **Glorified**, found 42 times.

**Truth.** (17.) Used 25 times.

### God With Us.

*"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."*

—JOHN i, 14.

In one of his addresses Dwight L. Moody said: "A man once asked me what was the best book on the divinity of Christ. I told him the best one was written by a man named John, the son of Zebedee. The man thought a while and said, 'Let me see, was he an English writer?' I said, 'No.' 'Well, was he an American writer?' 'No.' 'Well, where can I get his work?' 'At most any bookstore,' I said. 'What shall I ask for?' I looked him in the eye and told him to ask for the Bible. He would find John in it, bound up with several other good books bearing on theological matters." John plunges into the mystery of Christ's divinity with his first sentence. Matthew and Luke begin their narratives with the earthly origin of Jesus, John strikes back into eternity for an explanation of Christ's advent among man. His Master is not merely the Messiah of humanity; He is also the manifestation of God in terms of human life.

"The world by wisdom knew not God." These words have been suggested as an epitaph for the tomb of ancient philosophy. They describe as accurately the failure of modern thought apart from revelation. "In my heaven I find no God," said Laplace. "I have peered through the heavens for sixty years," wrote Lalande, "and have

never seen Him yet." Said a white-haired Indian to Sir John Franklin, "I am an old man now, but I have never seen God." John's word is true, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Christ as the perfect *exegesis* of God fulfills the necessities of the human mind and heart.

Manifestations of God have been multiplied through the ages. Nature has been forever breaking forth into syllables and sentences containing a revelation of the Eternal. As Sir William Jones has written:

"The heavens are a point from the pen of His perfection;  
The world is a rosebud from the bower of His beauty;  
The sun is a spark from the light of His wisdom;  
And the sky a bubble on the sea of His power."

History has gradually unfolded a record of His doings among men. Conscience has constantly admonished the soul of His righteousness. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." But these revelations have been fragmentary and provisional. Their messages could only be caught by spiritually heightened intelligences. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." The utterance is clear and comprehensive. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."



A metaphysical discussion of that term *Word*, the best, though not an entirely satisfactory translation of the Greek term *Logos*, would possibly weary us. We may have small interest in the fact that this was a kind of philosophical expression employed and understood alike by cultivated Jews and Greeks. We may not even have curiosity to know how John, the fisherman, hap-

pened to light upon it, though we shall probably think it was an inspiration, since it is so beautifully apposite for his purpose. What will doubtless seize our minds is that John wanted to say: "In Christ God has uttered Himself—the long silence has been broken—God has become vocal in forms of speech we can understand by an immediate and not an intermediate process."

Yet we may well pause a little on that term *Word*. A man's word is that by which his mind, his will, his power, his character is expressed. His word is his own; it is not shared, and can not be shared, with another. It can not be separated from himself; in a sense it is himself. By it we know his thought, his purpose, his character. When a man says, "I give you my word," he pledges his character. All that constitutes his personality has been committed to his declaration. So Christ is God uttered in terms of personality such as we can apprehend.

Let us go a little deeper. "The Word was made flesh." That does not mean that God made the best man He was capable of producing, and then sent him to earth as His representative. It is not doubted that God reveals Himself in some degree in all human beings, and it is conceivable that God might make a man who should illustrate in himself all that God intended to reveal by human nature, and who should perfectly conform to His will; yet this ideal man would not be what Christ is. Christ is not simply a perfect man. He is God incarnate. The personality is divine. Christ is God with us. Upon the mystery we do not attempt to lay hands, but we must thank God that the Word is made flesh, for without that wonderful transaction a necessity of our natures would not be met.

Professor Bowne recalls the story of Serapion, a worthy monk, who in early times fell into the error of taking the figurative language of the Bible in a strictly literal sense. In this way he came to look upon God as an enormous and omnipotent human being, and his mind was filled with gross material conceits of the divine personality. Paphnutius, a priest, and Photinus, a deacon,

reasoned with him, and showed him that God is a spirit without bodily parts, and finally by their arguments and by their personal authority they persuaded Serapion to renounce his misconceptions. Then they offered thanks to God for having restored the deluded disciple to the true faith. But in the very midst of their thanksgiving the monk threw himself on the ground, weeping and wailing because, as he said, they had taken away his God and left him no one to whom he could pray.

Such is the constitution of our minds, that only persons of the most refined intellects can find satisfaction in a contemplation of God which does not identify Him with those expressions of personality which are common to our own being. When we get confused about the person of God it is a most happy circumstance that we can turn to the figure of Jesus Christ and say, "He is God."



The Word made flesh is, then, the most convincing external evidence of the existence and character of God. It is the one satisfactory demonstration that God is accessible, available, attainable, tangible. There are other proofs of God's existence. Theistic philosophy, let us confess, has made out its case, and whoever has acuteness of mind enough to follow the argument will probably be convinced of that. He will feel that there must be a God to correspond with the deep-seated conviction of universal mankind that there is an invisible Power in the universe. He will see that nature can not be studied without bringing an overwhelming conclusion that there is an ultimate energy endowed with intelligence and will, that is, with personal qualities. When Liebig was asked if he believed that the grass and flowers which he saw around him grew by mere chemical forces he replied: "No; no more than I could believe that the books on botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces." But then, if you give me no better God than one constructed out of the necessities of thought, I would be almost as happy if you had given me no God at all.



If there is no fellowship with Him, if He is not accessible and available, my interest in Him outside of a philosophical requirement is very slight. I view nature which speaks of God with no great joy. The smiling fields only exasperate me. I am like Job of old: "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I can not perceive Him; on the left hand where He doth work, but I can not behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand that I can not see Him."

Those Russian peasants, sweeping up to the palace of the Czar, a great volume of humanity, eager for royal clemency and sympathy, presented a most dramatic spectacle. Civilization is appalled that a sovereign endowed with such immense power could apparently be indifferent, unmoved by the appeal of his oppressed and struggling subjects. But the pathos of the Czar's repulsion would be immeasurably outdone by the indifference of the eternal God to the pitiful clamors of humanity, if He were to remain absolutely silent in the presence of their deep and universal solicitude to find Him. But God is with us. Incarnation affirms it, and the experience of the race with Jesus Christ confirms it. God has been made flesh and tabernacled with us. We may say as did the patriarch Job, after he had received the full revelation of God's fellowship with him, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee."



The Word made flesh is a disclosure of the character of God. In the face of Jesus Christ we see that He is goodness personified. Is not that our highest conception of the Eternal? The most convincing attributes of God are not power, vast size, dazzling glory, but goodness without a flaw, holiness that can not be tempted, love that accommodates itself to all the needs of His creatures, spiritual qualities which show themselves to be truly divine. Are not these the qualities which in human beings make their most effective appeals to our souls? The great heart wins our admiration in competition with the strong mind. If God could only make His approach



to us through our intellects, He would not produce those great effects upon our conscience which are so necessary to our moral and spiritual welfare. It is because through Jesus Christ He has access to our hearts that He wins us to Himself. One can even express tolerance for the conquerors who have been chiefly wholesale murderers when he sees that occasionally they fell into deeds of goodness and charity; and the question which most deeply interests us is not "Is God great?"—every one can see that He is—but "Is God good?" The heavens declare the glory of God, but they do not declare His love in unmistakable terms. They show that He is an artist and loves beauty, that He is an artificer and has wrought incomparably; that His works are full of order and harmony; that He has filled the universe with a certain kind of melody; that He has the mind of a perfect poet; and from these considerations we should doubtless suspect the element of goodness in His nature. But absolute proof of this would be lacking without such a manifestation of His character as we have in Jesus Christ. It is only in such personal relations as are exhibited in the life of Jesus that the inherent and eternal goodness of God are made clear, and when the soul falls into confusion concerning the character of the invisible God there is only sure relief in gazing upon the figure of the Son of God. If we question the goodness of God we have only to look upon the face of His Anointed. It was such an experience which settled forever the faith of the early apostles. "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

The mystery of the Incarnation is insoluble; its message is immeasurably blessed.

The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?  
 So, the All-Great were the All-Loving, too—  
 So, through the thunder comes a human voice  
 Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!  
 Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!"

—*Browning.*

Gustavus Adolphus, rising before the dawn on the day of the battle of Lützen, refused to put on his breast-plate because his old wounds hurt him under harness. "God is my breast-plate," he said, and went upon the glorious field. When asked for a watchword he replied, "God with us." His soldiers sang "A mighty fortress is our God," as they advanced against the foe; and sustained by an unfaltering trust in the Divine Presence they wrought a wondrous triumph.

That is the heartening message of the Incarnation—God is with us, not beyond us.



## PART I.

Manifestation of Christ's Glory Through Works and Words Connected With His Public Ministry.— Chapters I, 19—XII.

### ANALYSIS.

#### I. INTRODUCTORY PERIOD : INITIAL TESTIMONIES.

1. The Witness of John the Baptist. (I, 19-37.)
2. The Witness of the Disciples. (I, 38-51.)

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8. The Healing of the Man Born Blind. (IX.)
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3. The Quest of the Greeks. (XII, 20-36.)
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## SECTION I.

### INTRODUCTORY PERIOD : INITIAL TESTIMONIES.

#### CHAPTER I. 19-51.

THE author of the Fourth Gospel attaches much importance to evidence in the plan of his work. Seven kinds of testimony are adduced. They may be distinguished as the witness (1) of John the Baptist, (2) of other individuals, (3) of the works of Jesus, (4) of the Father, (5) of the Scriptures, (6) of Jesus Himself, (7) of the Holy Spirit.

John makes large use of the individual witness. At the forefront of his Gospel he presents the testimony of John the Baptist, and follows immediately with the testimony of certain persons who subsequently became apostles. Throughout the work he pauses to insert the testimony of those who were convinced by the words and works of Jesus. Notable examples are the following: Nathanael (i, 49), Andrew (i, 41), Nicodemus (iii, 2), Samaritan woman (iv, 29), Samaritan men (iv, 42), Man born blind (ix), Martha (xi, 27), Thomas (xx, 28).

Introductory to the public ministry of Jesus our author presents two notable examples of personal testimony to His character and mission.

1. THE WITNESS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.
2. THE WITNESS OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES.

## IV.

# THE WITNESS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

## CHAPTER I. 19-37.

The Gospel of John is the most original, the most important, the most influential book in all literature. . . . It is simple as a child and sublime as a seraph, gentle as a lamb and bold as an eagle, deep as the sea and high as the heavens.—*Schaff*.

WHILE the other Evangelists give impressive pictures of the career of John the Baptist, our author only glances slightly at these matters, while he lays strong emphasis on the testimony of the man. Mentioned twice in the Prologue (6, 15). Reasons for the emphasis laid on this testimony: (1) A natural and personal one—John the Baptist is the man who pointed John the Evangelist to Jesus. (2) John the Baptist the most prominent man of his times, universally accepted by the people as a prophet, who could not be supposed mistaken concerning the chief item of his mission. (3) Divinely inspired. "A man sent from God whose name was John." (4) A dominant personality. "Certainly among the six greatest men the world has seen." (*Dods*.) "There hath not risen a greater." (*Jesus*.)

The position of John the Baptist deserves careful study. His birth and parentage. Entrance upon the prophetic office. In a sense belonged to the new dispensation. Marked the point of emergence of the Christian Church into history. Probably preached and baptized contemporaneously with Jesus for a year. Threefold testimony of John the Baptist. Given on three successive days. 1. To the Sanhedrin Deputation—the Messiah announced. 2. To the populace—the Messiah pointed out. 3. To John's disciples—the Messiah to be followed.



I. THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE SANHEDRIN (19-28).

The Messiah Announced.

1. **The Investigating Committee.** Deputation of priests and Levites. Sanhedrin, the ecclesiastical head of the Jewish nation. Composed of seventy-one members including the high priest, who was president *ex officio*. Contained three classes of persons: Chief Priests, probably high priests who had retired from office, and members chosen from the highest priestly families; Elders, probably the other members in general, whether lay or Levitical; Scribes, experts in the law, jurists by profession. They were generally Levites, and hence their connection with the deputation. Perhaps not a formal embassy, but an influential committee of inquiry, sent at the instigation of the Pharisees, who could not afford to ignore a movement which was gaining strength every day, and which heralded the approach of the Messiah.
2. **The Baptist's modest disclaimer (20-23).** His self-forgetfulness. Will not permit himself to be regarded as anything more than a voice, heralding the coming Messiah. Compare Isa. xl, 3. Leveling of roads in the East for approaching sovereigns an illustration.
3. **Explanation of his Baptism (24-28).** A rite being introduced into the theocracy without official sanction. If John the Baptist is not the Messiah, or any great prophet, as he insists, why then does he baptize?—the question of the Pharisees. Difficulty of interpreting John's reply. Perhaps the meaning is best expressed in this way: If the Messiah has actually come, and John is His true forerunner, he is justified in inaugurating this rite. With a significant glance into the crowd he says, "The Messiah is here! I need no other authentication." This must have produced a sensation.

## II. THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY TO THE POPULACE (29-34).

### The Messiah Pointed Out.

"He no longer merely says, 'He is there,' but he cries, 'There He is!' " (*Godet.*) The Baptist's announcement not a continuous discourse, but a series of sudden outbursts inspired by the occasion.

1. **A Wonderful Title**—"The Lamb of God." Probable reference to Isa. liii, also to the paschal lamb. Same figure employed by John the Evangelist in the Apocalypse. The sin of the world regarded as one great load.
2. **The Ground of the Baptist's Confidence (31-33).** His testimony is based on the testimony from heaven. The visible token—the hovering dove, and the audible token—the voice from heaven. (Matt. iii, 16, 17.)
3. **The Son of God (34).** The title used by the voice from heaven. The Baptist bears testimony to Christ's divine origin with eagerness in view of this celestial witness.

## III. THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY TO HIS DISCIPLES (35-37).

### The Messiah To Be Followed.

One of the disciples is Andrew, and the other is presumed to be John, from the modest way in which he is mentioned. They are urged to follow Jesus. They accept the injunction eagerly. Thus begins the Christian movement.

**The Testimony of John the Baptist Summarized:** He witnesses to the pre-eminence of Jesus (27, 30); the pre-existence of Jesus (15, 30); the efficacy of His redemption (29); His spiritual endowment (33); His unique personality (34).

**The Effects of the Baptist's Testimony.** They are partly known and partly conjectured. Silence on the

part of the Sanhedrin deputation. Unknown results with the crowd, though many persons must have been impressed. A decision for Christ by Andrew and Peter. We must feel the weight of this man's testimony, for he was qualified as few others could be to bear reliable witness.

### The Man Who Discovered Christ.

*"And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."*—JOHN i, 34.

"I will go with that man," said young William Hazlitt, after he had been eagerly listening to Samuel Taylor Coleridge. From that hour the lad's life was strongly influenced by this swift but sure decision. It is a high day in any man's history when his soul leaps into conscious fellowship with a spirit worthy to lead him to heights of nobility. The true character of a man is shown by the objects to which he gravitates or the persons to whom he is drawn by an irresistible fascination. The disciples of Socrates were not conferring any distinction upon him, but were glorifying their own lives, when they attached themselves to him. Jesus passed in review before the eyes of many who saw nothing in Him of surpassing quality. It was proof that they themselves were deficient in character. When John, the Baptizer, recognized the supremacy of Jesus, he dignified himself and revealed his own interior worth.

When Sir Humphry Davy was applauded for his important discoveries, he replied, "My best discovery was Michael Faraday." After a man has attained eminence there are many to claim they foresaw his greatness. Zola wrote on for years before his pen earned his bread. Then suddenly a novel attracted attention, and all his works were in demand. Millet was once compelled to paint signs, instead of works of art, in order to buy food for his family. About the time his "Angelus" was finished he wrote to a friend: "We have only wood for two or three days more. . . . I am suffering and sad." Later his works sold for fabulous sums. When he died there

was an explosion of sympathy and an universal rendering of justice to his memory. Anybody can discover a man when he has become famous. It is the rare mind which detects the genius in its earliest struggles for expression. The noblest character may suffer a temporary obscurity. Jesus was not known to His own family. It is doubtful if His mother realized the full significance of His person. To John the Baptizer belongs the distinction of having first discovered that Jesus was the Christ. The process of his discovery deserves attention.



He was expecting the Messiah. He had been set apart for the prophetic office, and had interpreted the signs of the times. The age was calling for a deliverer. The low point of current religious life indicated the necessity. He had spent long years in the wilderness ruminating upon the matter. The Holy Spirit had brooded over his thought. He became possessed of the sublime conviction that the Messiah would appear in his generation, that He was even now approaching. Then he started forth to proclaim His advent, knowing that in God's good time He would be discovered. "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight," sounded along the valley of the Jordan. The multitudes came to his baptism. He instructed them in the things which were essential to a genuine penitence, and evermore added, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." He knew the crisis was near. He felt the premonitory tokens in his own soul, as men experience the anticipatory tremors of a new movement in society. He went about his work with his mind strangely alert, his ears attentive, his eyes open. Somewhere, and at some time, out of the crowds which flocked to his ministry the Messiah would emerge, and his own mission would be finished. As Adams and Leverrier

were convinced that the planet Neptune existed long before it was discovered, because they noted that at one point along its orbit the planet Uranus was deflected from the perfect curve of its track through space by the attraction of some unknown body, and from their calculations were able to determine accurately where this ponderous bulk was located, the telescope triumphantly confirming their predictions; so the Baptizer, reckoning from the spiritual data which were available to his extraordinary insight, proclaimed the coming of the Messiah, and saw his prophecy fulfilled as gloriously as any astronomer ever beheld his mathematical computations vindicated.



One day John the Baptizer was impressed with the appearance of a stranger who came to the Jordan for baptism. There is something in the bearing of a great character which certifies to the inner dignity of his soul. Bismarck told a friend that it was impossible to imagine a position, however trying, in which the old King William did not look and act every inch a king. Even in déshabille, in bed, old and worn out, when shot at by Nobiling, and wounded with small shot as though he were a pheasant, there was always something dignified about him, which differentiated him from other people. There was a serene nobility in the carriage of the candidate for baptism who now appeared before John the Baptizer which arrested his attention. The man was Jesus of Nazareth, whom John afterward says he did not know. This seems strange, for they had grown up together. Still they had been separated for years, the one pursuing his ascetic life in the wilderness, the other quietly growing up in Nazareth. Possibly they had not met since they had attained their manhood.

It is more probable, however, that John meant to say he did not recognize Jesus in His true office. He knew Him as his kinsman, but he did not perceive that He was the Messiah at the moment. He had no adequate knowledge of the vast mission of Jesus. Still he recognized

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His superiority, and soon had reason to hesitate about baptizing Him.

Baptism involved confession for sin, and Jesus could not confess sins which He had not committed. When, therefore, He began His acknowledgment preparatory to baptism, He must have made a representative confession, assuming the sins of the race, identifying Himself with fallible humanity, and thereby revealing Himself as the Redeemer of mankind.

Perhaps, also, there was a confidential conversation between these two, in which Jesus explained to the Baptizer His true relation to humanity. In any case John hesitates to perform the rite of baptism for one who apparently can not properly receive it. 'He sees in Jesus one higher than himself in holy character. "I have need to be baptized of Thee," he exclaims, "and comest Thou to me?" And Jesus replied, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."



When they proceeded into the water together a wondrous thing occurred, which confirmed the impression already made on the mind of the Baptizer, and vindicated the self-testimony of Jesus. Luke tells us that when Jesus was baptized He prayed. The response was immediate. From the opening heaven "the Holy Ghost descended in bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." That was the ultimate proof for John, for the Spirit which had brooded over him in his solitude had indicated this as the sure token by which he should know the Divine One who "baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Now John knew Jesus as he had not known Him before. "A blind man who had received his sight during the hours of darkness," says a learned writer, "might imagine, when he saw the reflected glory of the moon or morning star in the eye of dawn, that he knew the nature and had felt the glory of light; but amidst the splendors of sunrise or of noon he might justly say, 'I knew it not.'"



Now the Baptizer is qualified to offer testimony of incalculable value. Thus far he has simply prophesied that One was coming after him who was preferred before him. Now he could proclaim that the Great One had arrived. When the Sanhedrin sends the deputation from Jerusalem to inquire into His mission, the Baptizer affirms that the expectation of Israel is realized—the Messiah is standing in their very presence.



The next day, as he sees Jesus coming to him, he cries, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" A new conception of Christ has dawned upon him. From his recognition of Christ's official relation to the race, as the representative man who is to bring in the kingdom of God, he passes on to the recognition of Christ's sacrificial relation to the world and to God. He is the Divine offering for humanity. John's Jewish training would prepare him for the idea. His priestly connections through his father would dispose him to embrace it. The inspiration of the Holy Ghost would confirm it. And in a moment of sudden, sure illumination he exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God!" He may have recalled the words of Isaiah (liii, 4-7), which now bore a new and profounder meaning. He may have thought of the paschal lamb offered in many households. His mind may have been quickened by the sight of sheep being driven up to Jerusalem for the approaching Passover. But the Holy Spirit must have opened his soul to the deep meaning of Christ's person and mission.

When Agassiz, out of the depths of his well-stored mind, was able to picture for an assembly of English scientists an exact reproduction of a fossil fish which had been discovered, though he was not aware of it, in lower strata than had been previously known, achieving this feat by means of pure reasoning, based on what ought to be there if it had any existence, the company were astounded at his intellectual triumph, and an observer remarked, "To such an extent had this great



scientist advanced in a knowledge of the plan of God in nature." John's recognition of Jesus reveals a higher perception of the plan of God in human nature, and it was due to a profound intelligence quickened by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

It is noteworthy that this richer conception of Christ's office which John the Baptizer obtained is only described in the Fourth Gospel. In the accounts of his preaching which the other evangelists give the judicial aspects of Christ's mission are presented with something akin to harshness. "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff will He burn with fire unquenchable." Now it is the meek, the unspotted Lamb, whose grace overtops His justice, who is not to condemn but to save the world, "which taketh away the sin of the world," as contrasted with the avenging servant of Jehovah who will destroy the impenitent. When this more satisfying thought of Christ's mission had entered the mind of John, there was nothing for the conscientious prophet to do but pass his disciples on to the Lord. "Behold the Lamb of God!" spoken on the following day, was intended as an exhortation to follow Christ, and was so understood by his companions. "And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. He is the ultimate need of the world. Beyond Him is no one. He is the altogether lovely and the chiefest among ten thousand."



The Baptizer's discovery of Christ is the prototype of all the subsequent findings of the Savior by seeking sinners. The conviction that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is a development in the soul. There is first an eagerness to find that Christ who can fill the needs of human life. The presentation of Jesus in His spotless purity impresses the soul that He is the highest manifestation of grace and goodness. Under this revelation the soul is smitten with the terror of its own infirmities, and the dread that this Perfect One will condemn the sinner to destruction. Then the love of Christ in offering

Himself for the world's relief turns terror into penitence and distrust into faith, and having accepted the propitiatory offices of Christ, the soul exclaims, "I see, and bear record that this is the Son of God."

It is related that once Mendelssohn came to see the great Freiburg organ. At first the old custodian refused him permission to put his fingers upon it, not knowing who he was. Finally he grudgingly allowed him to play a few notes, and soon the most wonderful music was rolling forth from the instrument. The jealous guardian of the organ was spell-bound. At length he came up beside the great musician and asked his name. When he was told he stood almost dumb with humiliation and self-condemnation, and then exclaimed with deep abasement, "And I refused you permission to play upon my organ!" How foolish it is to tease the soul about the philosophy of the atonement, to stumble at the proclamation of the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," to say with Peter Cooper, "I don't need any one to die for my sins," to repudiate the theory of a vicarious sacrifice because it does not appeal to reason, while all the time the Master stands ready to transform life, not on the strength of our understanding, but of our obedience. The evidence that Jesus Christ is what John the Baptizer declared Him to be lies in the Divine harmonies which He evokes from natures which are surrendered to His touch.

## V.

# THE WITNESS OF THE CALLED DISCIPLES.

## CHAPTER I. 38-51.

**This Gospel is the consummation of the Gospels, as the Gospels are of all the Scriptures.—*Origen.***

THE value of such testimony as John now presents lies in the fact that it is unofficial and gratuitous. The author evidently holds that it provides a sufficient ground for belief to those who are willing to receive it. However, it can only secure an external relation between the believer and the object of belief. In order to be vital, faith must enter into direct contact with its object. The weight and volume of such testimony will predispose his readers, John believes, to accept Christ as the Son of God. He represents Jesus as pronouncing a special benediction on those who have been wise enough to accept Him on the strength of such testimony. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (xx, 29). Value of testimony of individuals in our own times is very obvious. Persons who know the Lord by a spiritual experience of His fellowship make a profound impression on candid inquirers. Modern illustrations. We have here two groups of witnesses, falling into two successive days.

### I. THE TESTIMONY OF ANDREW AND JOHN (38-42).

- i. **The Unmentioned Disciple, probably John**, who in other passages suppresses his own name, though he is evidently prominent in the transaction. Impression made on Andrew and John by the proclamation of the Baptist is easily imagined. Their timid following is interrupted by the incisive question of

Jesus, "What seek ye?"—not "Whom?" Answer will reveal whether they are inspired by simple curiosity or genuine interest. "Where dwellest Thou?" "Come and see." The urgency of Jesus. Perhaps they intend to ascertain His whereabouts, and then visit Him at their convenience. They are bidden at once. They accept and abide with Him "that" never-to-be-forgotten "day" (39).

2. **Breaking the News to Peter (40-42).** Archbishop Trench calls this the Eureka chapter. "We have found the Messias!" Andrew is apparently not so great a man as some others of the apostles, but he can bring his brother, who is a very aggressive person. Twice again Andrew is portrayed bringing some one to Jesus: the lad with the loaves and fishes (vi, 8), and certain Greeks (xii, 22). Herein lies the key to his character.

3. **Reading Peter's Character (42).** "I know you as you are, and I know what you can become—a stone." The insight and foresight of Jesus.

## II. THE TESTIMONY OF PHILIP AND NATHANAEL (43-51).

1. **Finding Philip (43).** On the way to Galilee Jesus calls Philip. An illustration of the way in which the truth is sometimes directly applied to a man's conscience without any apparent intermediary. A profound impression of the character of Jesus is immediately made upon his mind.

2. **Breaking the News to Nathanael (45).** "We have found Him." So one torch lights another. Nathanael's hesitation. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Study character of the Galileans. Philip's wise response: "Come and see." An echo of Christ's words to Andrew and John. Christianity's challenge to the world—Investigate. The height of wisdom in modern evangelism.

3. **Reading Nathanael's Character (47, 48).** His name means, "the gift of God." Under the fig-tree Jesus saw the devotions of the man whom He called "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." It was under a fig-tree that Augustine heard the famous "Take and read." (*Plummer.*) Nathanael's surprise. What consternation among us if we saw ourselves as He sees us!
4. **Nathanael's Testimony (49).** "Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel." The greater title includes the less. The response of Jesus—"Verily, verily." "Amen, amen." Twenty-five times used by John in this gospel. Always introduces a truth of unusual importance.
5. **Christ's Favorite Designation of Himself.** "The Son of Man" (51). Used upwards of eighty times in the four gospels, always by Christ of Himself as Messiah. Expression is found in the Psalms, where it means the ideal man; in Ezekiel, where it is applied to the prophet, and in the night visions of Daniel. Christ's use gave it a new meaning; in Him the whole human race culminates. (*Plummer.*)

#### Note.

This call of the disciples is to be compared with the final call in Galilee after the miraculous draught of fishes. (Matt. iv, 18-22; Mark i, 16-20; Luke v, 1-11.) The differences in the accounts are sufficient to mark them as two events.

Observe how Jesus adapts Himself to the different temperaments and conditions of men. For Andrew and John there is the ever-memorable evening conversation. For Simon Peter the heart-searching word, which penetrates his very being. For Philip the peremptory command, "Follow Me." For Nathanael a gracious courtesy, which disarms his prejudice. Thus there are those who seek Christ, those who are brought to Christ, and those whom Christ seeks. (*Dods.*) Fine suggestions for evangelistic diplomacy here.

### Introduced to Jesus.

*"Come and see."*

*"We have found the Messiah!"*

*"And he brought him to Jesus."*

—JOHN i, 39, 41, 42.

An editor went to church hungry for spiritual truth. A young minister of prepossessing appearance was in the pulpit, and the newspaper man joyfully anticipated a helpful discourse. But the preacher's first words were a quotation from Herbert Spencer, and the spirit of the editor experienced a frigid revulsion. He had come to hear what the Lord would say, and a skeptical philosopher was hurled at him. It was a sad mistake. Christ is Himself the ultimate expression of truth. When He speaks in person there is no need for other witness. To bring the soul into contact with Him is to provide the most satisfactory evidence of Christianity. The faith of that believer is secure whose perpetual prayer is:

Lord Jesus, make Thyself to me  
A living, bright reality,  
More present to faith's vision keen  
Than any earthly object seen,  
More dear, more intimately nigh  
Than e'en the sweetest human tie.

The most exalted moments in the biography of a soul are those which mark the discovery of a great truth, in quest of which long and patient toil has been expended. It would be worth a lifetime of painful investigation to experience the indescribable emotions of an Archimedes when, having suddenly realized that great law of hydrostatics with which his name is associated, he rushed from his bath to arouse the sluggish loungers on the streets of Syracuse with his triumphant, "I have found it." One might contentedly wear out a century in assiduous study, if at the end he could enter into the rapture of a Kepler when, having proved that the ellipse satisfies the requirements of the movements of the heavenly bodies, he exclaimed in ecstasy, "O God, I am thinking Thy thoughts after Thee!" And who would not covet the joy of the



Galilean fisherman who, after long waiting for the Deliverer of Israel, came upon Jesus of Nazareth one day, and after a few hours spent in His society rushed home to his brother, and excitedly cried, "We have found the Messias!" That was the greatest day in Andrew's life, and it was fraught with immeasurable consequences.



Andrew made the acquaintance of Jesus because he was invited to do so. The invitation came in response to his curiosity to see where Jesus lived, and his desire for a personal interview with Him. "Come and see," is the Master's encouraging word to him. The next day Philip adopts the same language with Nathanael, who doubts whether any good thing can come out of Nazareth. "Come and see"—it is a goodly challenge for every protagonist of Christianity to use with skeptics. It is the one way to meet misconceptions and misrepresentations. Men say that the doctrines of the Church are dry, obscure, and confusing. "Come and see; perhaps they have been improperly presented to you." They say they have doubts concerning the whole scheme of religion, and the teaching of faith does not appeal to them. "Come and see. Perhaps there is a solvent for your doubts, strength for your weakness, wisdom for your groping, salvation for your sin." They say they can not be sure that Christ is great enough for this age with its widening horizon. "Come and see. We invite investigation. We solicit examination." We remember the consequences of personal inquiry when Jesus was among men in the flesh, and are confident. It is recalled that, confronted by His sublime presence, the temple police said, "Never man spake like this man;" that Nathanael exclaimed, "Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel;" that Peter said, "Thou art the Christ;" that the Centurion cried, "Truly this was the Son of God!" If we can not convince men of the truth of our religion by introducing them to Christ, there can be no hope of doing it by other means, for Christ is the luminous expression of His own



teaching, the ultimate proof of His own doctrines. Christianity is Christ, not something about Christ.

The Christian, therefore, enjoys an advantage which does not belong to any other religionist. He is under no necessity to demonstrate the credibility of his faith by recourse to argument. To him that is the most delusive method of proving religion. Men have made themselves atheists by logic, however absurd that may seem to the Christian who believes that reason is wholly on his side. There is no creed so preposterous that it can not be vindicated by rational processes. Christianity stands not upon argument, but upon a conviction wrought by contact with a person, even Jesus Christ the Lord. If you bring down upon an unbelieving soul a plea for Christianity which is without one logical flaw, you may silence him, but leave him unconvinced. Argument seldom relieves doubts. It often drives them deeper. The wind in the fable could not tear the traveler's cloak from his shoulders. He simply wrapped it the more tightly about him, until the genial sun warmed him into the necessity of casting it off. Argument is a hammer which pounds the flinty rock of infidelity into dust, but does not change its constituents. You can shatter the skeptic's armor and reduce him to pulp with your merciless logic, and when you have finished, every molecule in him will still cry out his unbelief. The irresistible corrective for skepticism is Christ. "Come and see." And it is not very important by what motive men are led into Christ's society. Andrew and John are curious to ascertain where Jesus lives. "Come and see." Nicodemus is eager to discover how much there is the new prophet who is making such a stir. "Come and see," though it be under cover of darkness. Nathanael is a critic, who will apply severe tests to one who emerges from a place of unsavory reputation. "Come and see." To come is to be convinced.

When Munkacsy's "Christ Before Pilate" was on exhibition a few years ago in Hamilton, Ontario, a sailor from one of the lake boats accosted the woman who was in attendance at the door with the blunt question, "Is Christ here? How much to see Christ?" When he was

told the admission fee, he growled out, "Well, I suppose I'll have to pay it," and putting down a piece of silver he swaggered into the room. He sat down in front of the great picture and studied it for a moment or two, and presently off came his hat. He gazed upon it a little longer, and then leaning down he picked up the descriptive catalogue which he had dropped when he took his seat. He read it over, and studied the painting anew, dropping his face into his hands at intervals. Thus he remained for a full hour. When he came out there were tears in his eyes, and suppressed sobs in his voice as he said: "Madam, I came here to see Christ because my mother asked me to. I am a rough man sailing on the lakes, and before I went on this cruise my mother wanted me to see this picture, and I came in to please her. I never believed in any such thing, but the man who could paint a picture like that—he must have believed in it. There is something in it that makes me believe in it, too. Madam, God helping me, I am a changed man from to-day." If an idealization of Christ by an artist can so effectively appeal to the conscience of a wayward man, what will not a vision of the Master, inspired of the Holy Ghost, accomplish for those who sincerely seek an introduction to Him?



"We have found the Messiah!" cries Andrew. "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write," says Philip. It is wonderful that these men came so quickly to admit the true character of Jesus when we remember the hesitation which marked the conduct of many others on first meeting the Master's claims. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." His own kinsmen after the flesh were suspicious of Him. His own townsmen rejected Him. The persons who made public opinion, and were eminently respectable, finally hounded Him to death. Ever since His story has been known there have been reputable people of all degrees of intelligence who have spurned Him. But these disciples hailed Him with a faith which speedily blossomed out into rapture.

To be sure, there was a strong persuasion to the credit of Jesus in the testimony of John the Baptist, whose self-effacing modesty gave the flavor of truth to everything he would say in another's behalf. It is much that some one in whom we have confidence bears witness to the facts of religion. Said an infidel lawyer, who out of curiosity had attended a meeting where Christian experience was being narrated, "I hold in my hand the testimony of more than sixty persons. They use different language, but they all testify to the same things. Many of these persons I know well. I would believe their word on any subject. Why should I not believe what they say about religion? There must be some truth in what they hold." But not even the witness of John the Baptist would be enough to convince Andrew without the confirmation wrought by his personal interview with Jesus. How this did it is difficult to explain. Sometimes when the soul can give the least satisfactory account of its convictions it holds to them most tenaciously. Said Emerson: "All my opinions, affections, whimsies are tinged with belief . . . But I can not give reasons to a person of a different persuasion that are at all adequate to the force of my convictions. Yet when I fail to find the reason, my faith is not less." When the organist touches the keynote of the building he makes the whole structure vibrate with the tip of his finger, and every person in it feels the weird thrill. When Christ speaks He sweeps the cords of our nature with a hand that awakens deep response. Every one has experienced the mysterious sensation who has been proximate to Him. In some such way these men realized the Divine power of Jesus.

He was not exactly what they expected in the Messiah. But all their preconceptions were borne aside by the charm of His presence. Said an Indian orator to Montcalm: "We wanted to see this famous man who tramples the English under his feet. We thought we should find him so tall that his head would be lost in the clouds. But you are a little man, my father. It is when we look into your eyes that we see the greatness of the pine tree and the fire of the eagle." By coming close

to Jesus Andrew and Philip sprang into immediate conviction that He was the Christ.

That ability to recognize Christ in His true character is a high endowment in any soul. Not every man who has turned his thought toward Jesus has been able to assign Him to His right place. Renan said, "I am the only man in my time who has understood the character of Jesus," and then wrote a life of the Nazarene which is a perfect travesty of His person. Multitudes have failed as completely to grasp the meaning of the Christ. But Andrew said, "We have found the Messiah," and Philip said, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write"—and their joy was full.



Which is the fuller joy in life, the discovery of a great satisfaction, or the publishing of that discovery to others? Nearly always the sensations follow so fast upon one another that it is difficult to distinguish them. Still if one could not proclaim his discovery, half the joy of making it would be lost. "Rejoice with me; I have found the sheep that was lost!" cries the shepherd. "Rejoice with me; I have found the piece of silver that was lost!" exclaims the woman who had swept her house for the vagrant coin. "He went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter," is written of a leper whom Jesus cleansed. "We have found the Messiah!" cries Andrew to his brother. "And he brought him to Jesus." The exuberant spirit can not rest until his discovery has been made known to others. So the scientist feels when he has found a specific to conquer a hitherto fatal malady. So the poet feels when he has caught a vision of truth through the opening heavens. So the Christian feels when he has looked upon the face of the Christ, and has been transformed into His likeness. The venerable Bede dubbed Andrew "Introducer"—he introduced others to Jesus. There can be no higher function in life. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

## SECTION II.

### PERIOD OF UNDISTURBED ACTIVITY.

#### CHAPTERS II-IV.

WE now enter upon the public ministry of Jesus, in which we have the self-manifestation of Christ's glory in works and words (1) during a period of undisturbed activity, (2) during a period of conflict, (3) during a period of transition and judgment, the whole being comprehended in Chapters II—XII. We first take up the period of comparative quiet, which constitutes the second section of Part I, including Chapters II—IV. Jesus is now slowly emerging into publicity. He has not yet awakened the furious hostility of the Jewish authorities. He manifests His glory by working miracles, by exercising spiritual sovereignty, by self-revelations to individuals, by discourses and interviews. These manifestations extend through the entire section, which may be divided as follows:

1. THE WEDDING AT CANA.
2. THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.
3. THE INTERVIEW WITH NICODEMUS.
4. THE FINAL TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.
5. THE INTERVIEW WITH THE SAMARITANS.
6. THE HEALING OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON.



## VI.

# THE WEDDING AT CANA.

## CHAPTER II. 1-12.

The first three evangelists give us diverse aspects of one glorious landscape. Saint John pours over that landscape a flood of heavenly sunshine, which seems to transfigure its very character, though every feature of the landscape remains the same.—*Farrar*.

### First Work in Galilee.

“Works” and “words” are significant and definitive terms in this Gospel. Not only does John make great use of them, but Jesus Himself appeals to His deeds and His utterances as evidence of His divine character and mission. In Part I of His work John presents the testimony of works and words in the following particulars:

1. **Seven Notable Miracles** (“signs”) are recorded in this section, viz.: Changing water into wine, healing of the nobleman’s son, healing of the lame man at Bethesda, the feeding of the five thousand, walking on the sea, healing of man born blind, raising of Lazarus. The first two of these occur in this section, the period of comparative quiet. Though called *miracles* in the Authorized Version, they are really designated by John as “signs,” and should always be so rendered. Used seventeen times in John’s gospel, and always with the same purpose. At least four words in the New Testament translated *miracles* — “signs,” “wonders,” “works,” “powers.” Christ’s miracles were in John’s thought signs of His divine mission, and symbolical of spiritual truth.



2. **Certain Episodes or Incidents** which, while they are not miraculous, are nevertheless of the nature of "signs," and bear witness to Christ's character, as for example, the cleansing of the temple, the triumphal entry, and others.
3. **Certain Interviews or Conversations**, in which Jesus discloses His true character to individuals. Most important among these are the colloquies with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. In such interviews Jesus truly manifests His glory.
4. **Several Discourses**. John's Gospel is especially marked by the fullness and variety with which these are given. Notable examples are the Bread of Heaven, the Good Shepherd, the discussions in Jerusalem at the feasts. In these Jesus manifests His glory and in some instances evokes external testimony to His divine authority.
5. **Results of These Manifestations**. They produce on the part of some unbelief, developing into malignant opposition; on the part of others belief, developing into joyous testimony. All this is in harmony with the purpose of John's Gospel, as foreshadowed in the Prologue or Introduction (i, 1-18).  
We are now to examine the first of these "signs," by which Jesus manifested His glory, producing belief on the part of His disciples.

#### I. THE FIRST SIGN (i. 1-12).

"There is an organic connection between the first chapter and the second. . . . The glory is declared in chapter one; the glory is manifested in chapter two."  
(*Strong*.)

1. **The First Sign is in the Home Circle**. Jesus enters sympathetically and joyously into the common life of men. He passes in this scene from the retirement, in which He has lived so long, into the publicity which marks His subsequent ministry. This beginning of miracles is in accord with the general plan

of Christ's kingdom, which comes without observation. It is in the circle of the family that He steps out into the perils of a public life.

2. **The First Sign is to Relieve a Necessity (3).** A friend in time of need. Embarrassment of the situation. Arrival of a half-dozen additional guests at a time when the supply of refreshments is running out. According to Eastern notions of hospitality this is a disgraceful calamity. The great day in the wedded pair's life. Jesus saves the situation, and blesses the company. Characteristic of Christ's miracles that they not only display His glory, but also are essentially humane and benevolent.
3. **The First Sign Marks Christ's Reluctance to Display Miraculous Power (4).** Also characteristic. Unwillingness to show power for the sole end of evoking wonder. Moreover, this would rush Him into publicity, absorbing service of a physical sort, immediate sacrifice of higher interests, and premature death. (a) The mother's solicitude (v. 3). With a woman's interest and sympathy, and a woman's anxiety to relieve a domestic embarrassment, she touches her great Son, of whose power she has had intimations, and of whose courtesy she has no doubt, and says, "They have no wine." (b) Christ's rejoinder (v. 4). "Woman," no term of contempt. Equivalent to "Lady." Perhaps a mild admonition, because she was innocently interfering in a region where she was not qualified to act. Might be rendered, "Mother, you must let Me act here in My own way, and My time for action has not yet come." (*Dods.*) The separation which is now setting in between His mother and Himself, so far as earthly relations are concerned, will continue until the crucifixion makes it complete.
4. **The First Sign Exhibits Christ's Lordship (5-10).** Mary's confidence in her Son survives the gentle rebuke (5). She knows His character. The help is given. They do "whatsoever He saith," and the

water pots of stone are filled to the brim with the choicest wine (10). The lordship of Jesus over nature is manifested in a three-fold way: He is shown to be the life of nature, He ennobles nature, He interprets nature.

## II. SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIRST SIGN.

1. **Criticism of the Story.** (1) Sometimes regarded as a mere parable, even asserted that what is intended is to show that the conversation of Jesus was so fascinating that the exhaustion of the wine was not noticed, or if noticed, not missed. This contradicts plain meaning of the narrative. (2) Omitted from other gospels. On the same ground there would be greater reason for rejecting the statement of Paul that Jesus appeared to five hundred persons at once after His resurrection. (1 Cor. xv, 6.) The fragmentary nature of the other gospels is to be taken into account. (3) Magical. Answer: Characteristic of magic that it dispenses with existing matter, but here Christ does not create, but transforms what already exists. (4) Useless. "A miracle of luxury," says one objector. "A miracle of love," says one defender. Not a parade of power. Excess not wasted, but remained a rich wedding gift to the pair. (5) Immoral. Conducing to intemperance. All God's gifts could be abused. The fed five thousand might have been gluttonous. Virtue consists not in being untempted, but in resisting temptation. The remark of the governor of the feast a crude pleasantry based on his own probable experience at similar feasts.
2. **Reflections of Christ's Glory in the Event.** (1) The sanctification of the home, of festivity, of marriage through Christ's presence and conduct which is not marked by asceticism like that of John the Baptist. Christ entered life to glorify it. (2) Produced profound impression upon His disciples. They "believed on Him." So shall all men when they behold Him furnishing the desolate and the sinning with all

that can console and sanctify their lives. (3) The munificence of Christ. A type of the fullness of grace and joy which Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, brings to the earth.

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### The Key to Conduct.

*"Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."*—JOHN ii, 5.

The lines of Longfellow are pertinent:

From all the narrow rules  
And subtleties of Schools,  
And the craft of tongue and pen,  
Bewildered in its search,  
Bewildered with the cry,  
"Lo, here! lo, there, the Church!"  
Poor, sad Humanity,  
Through all the dust and heat,  
Turns back with bleeding feet,  
By the weary road it came,  
Unto the simple thought  
By the great Master taught,  
And that remaineth still:  
"Not he that repeateth the name,  
But he that doeth the will!"

One of Haydn's friends once asked him how it happened that his Church music was almost always of an animating, cheerful, and even festive quality. The great composer replied: "I can not make it otherwise. I write according to the thoughts I feel. When I think upon God my heart is so full of joy that notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be easily forgiven me that I serve Him with a cheerful spirit."

It is noteworthy that Jesus enters upon His public career through the gateway of the most joyous social institution, and that during His entire ministry He manifested a cordial sympathy with the festive customs of the

people. To the mind familiarized with the tragic features of His life, and depressed by the tone of sadness which pervades much of His speech and action, the spectacle of Jesus mingling with the merry company in the gay intercourse of a wedding-feast, and joining freely in the jovial and light-hearted talk common to such an occasion, is a trifle disturbing. And if one is infected with the folly which makes asceticism a necessary accompaniment of the deepest piety, he will be somewhat puzzled by this apparent incongruity. But let him remember that Jesus possessed a complete human nature, that His participation in an event of almost hilarious human joy marks His perfect fellowship with men and women, that without occupying such a plane of equality with them He could have done little for their salvation, and that His presence at this feast has forever established the sanctity of marriage, the propriety of innocent festivity, and the fitness of religion to heighten the delights of society. Furthermore, is not the limitless extent of Christ's authority clearly set forth in the fact that the first exhibition of His miraculous power occurred in the domestic circle? He asserts Himself at the very center of the social organism. That means that He is Master everywhere.



An heroic statue of Prince Bismarck, surrounded by allegorical figures, rises in an immense square in Berlin to the west of the Reichstag Palace. The illustrious maker of united Germany stretches out his hand of bronze toward the massive structure, within which the elected representatives of the nation are legislating for the people, as if to caution and guide them in their deliberations. This is impressively apt, for it is known of all men that, though Bismarck has passed into the unseen world, his colossal genius still exercises sway over the destinies of the German commonwealth. In a nobler sense Jesus lifts Himself from the page of history, and discloses His eternal dominancy of the world. And the picture of His mother designating Him as the master of

a difficult and embarrassing situation is but a figure of the entire Christian community called the Church, whenever she is true to her divine commission, indicating Him as the final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

John Ruskin says at the close of one of his volumes: "This is the sum of all my writing, 'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.'" This should be both the essence and the substance of all Christian teaching. Christ's word is the ultimate test of belief and behavior. Christ's power and sympathy constitute man's sole reliance. Still a large share of Christendom is under the delusion that His mother possesses a kind of spiritual superiority, based upon her maternal relation to Him in the flesh. Yet in this very narrative Jesus is shown to avow His independence of her. "Woman, what have I do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." Mariolatry is a fascinating form of devotion. The adoration of the Virgin finds warrant for those who use it in sentiments truly beautiful. But, how can reason or religion have any patience with the notion that Mary can secure extraordinary favors for her partisans, while she is constantly urging, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it?" He is sufficient in Himself, requiring no corrective for His judgment, no stimulus for His sympathy, no supplement to His efficiency.



The present Kaiser said early in his reign, "Nothing must be done anywhere on the globe without the sanction of Germany's ruler." It was a boastful proclamation of the sovereign's faith in his own position as the lord of a world-power. His title to such pre-eminence was certain to be in dispute, for governments are jealous; but Christ's authority in the spiritual domain is not open to question. His mastery is not only legitimate, but it admits of no rivalry. It is maintained not by force of arms, but by supremacy of moral power over the souls of men. Renan's words are true: "He is a thousand times more living, a thousand times more loved, than He was in His short passage through life. He presides still



day by day over the destiny of the world. He started us in a new direction, and in that direction we still move."

Some kind of authority for the guidance of life all conscientious persons are seeking. It would gratify many of them if they could obtain an authentic utterance directly from Heaven concerning every problem of life. They wish that a standard of moral weights and measures were available like that which the government has adopted for use of material commodities. John Fiske records the impressions of a little American girl in Paris, who said, "Every man here has to have some other man to see that he does what he ought to do." It sometimes seems that to have a monitor who would infallibly correct us when we wander from the truth, and mark out for us a wise procedure in every emergency, and advise us exactly how to meet every questionable suggestion, would be a great piece of fortune. If God would only write His will on the sky with intervolved lightning flashes in language we could read with ease, how satisfactory it would be! To ascertain the right which He desires us to choose, and to distinguish the wrong which he wishes us to avoid—here is a problem too complicated for us. Not if we heed the words of Mary, "Whatsoever He saith to you, do it." Nothing is to be done anywhere in the world of Christian activity without His sanction. Life is amazingly simplified when it is thus subordinated to the control of Christ. Intellectual difficulties melt away when the soul adopts Paul's policy of "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Questions of conduct are solved readily when one agrees that "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."



It is unsafe to substitute any other method if we desire to reach ultimate authority. Can we not depend upon reason? Is not the mind a spectroscope to unbraid commingled truth and falsehood, to detect and analyze the qualities of things which lie remote from our hands,



to measure moral bulks and distances? Is not intellect, with its various functions, capable of making sure judgments? The world by wisdom knew not God." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto Him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Grotesque fancies take hold of the best brains, and the closest reasoners may become the vilest livers.

Is not this moral instinct we call conscience an adequate authority for the conduct of life? In its normal state it is as delicate and sensitive as a balance which is turned by a fleck of dust or a drop of dew. It admonishes of evil; it speaks the praise of good. It makes the soul miserable in vice and happy in virtue. Is not this the voice of authority—determining duty and denouncing sin? But conscientious men have wrought terrible mischief in the earth. Paul thought himself a devout servant of God while hounding the followers of Christ to death. In all good conscience men have written damnable heresies in their books, and under the sanctions of religion have performed deeds of violence and shame.

Is not the Church our sufficient guide to faith and service? Called into being by the providence of God to be a perpetual witness to the truth, her leaders assumed to be inspired by the Holy Ghost, her councils working on in successive centuries to forge faith into perfect forms, her chief bishops exercising lordship over the consciences of men, the results of her work in the world evidencing the divinity of her mission—is not the Church an infallible source of authority? The Romanist would have us believe this. But does history confirm us in the judgment? What enormities have flourished under the white shield of the Church! It is an institution composed of fallible human beings, however holy may be its purpose. Governments derive their rights from God. Monarchs and magistrates are servants of the Most High. But how imperfectly they represent Him! Yet they are to be regarded with honor. So the Church is to be esteemed with veneration, but it can not be the

total reliance of those who seek final authority for the conduct of life.

Will not the Scriptures furnish us with the certitude we require? Can we not turn confidently to them for precise guidance in every exigency? Only as we place Christ above the written revelation, and interpret all that is recorded in the light of His person. Remember that sentences from the Bible have been used to buttress slavery, to intrench polygamy, to vindicate persecution, to establish superstition, to approve war, and to confirm errors and iniquities of every sort. Recognize the imperfectness of reason, the corruptibility of conscience, the fallibility of the Church, and observe how utterly impossible it is to depend upon any human interpretation of the Scriptures.

Reason must be corrected by the thought of Him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Conscience must be clarified by Him who said, "I am the light of the world." The Church must be adjudged by the spirit of Him who said the gates of Hell should not prevail against it. The Bible must be interpreted by the words and works of Him who said of the Scriptures, "These are they which testify of Me." Christ is Himself the ultimate authority in the realm of the spirit. "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."



When one of Verdi's great compositions was rendered for the first time in Florence, it was received with tremendous applause by the huge assembly which came to hear it. But the torrent of popular enthusiasm which swirled about him was not powerful enough to turn his gaze from the face of Rossini, who sat in the audience. Without that master's intelligent approval the tumult of the throng brought no happiness to his soul. Unless Christ says, "Well done!" we may regard our faith inadequate and our lives ineffective. But since He speaks in no audible voice to us, how can we know His commands, how determine the course He would have us pursue? The matter is not involved in deep perplexity.

Do we want to know His will? There is much in that. It is inconceivable that a man should study the Gospels, imbibe their spirit, follow their teachings, and live in communion with Him whose story they tell, and still fail to perceive the ideals on which life should be molded. Is it our fondest wish to live the life of Christ? That will settle every question fundamental to correct conduct and sound faith. It may not make blunders of judgment impossible, or protect the mind from minor and non-essential heresies, but it will enthrone vital truth in the soul, and keep life sweet and wholesome to the end. It is incredible that a man who lives in daily fellowship with Christ through the Spirit should not know what his Master desires him to do in relation to business, politics, society, pleasure, and the various concerns of common life. He may have no specific word touching the minute details of conduct, but he will have a governing principle covering every conceivable exigency, and the Divine mind will inspire and influence his judgment to a right decision. Those who enter into spiritual fellowship with the Master, and abide in that sacred comradeship, may say with St. Paul, "We have the mind of Christ." To secure the Divine point of view, and to be actuated by the Divine motives, is to make certain of the noblest character and the finest actions. In such a happy estate the words of Lowell have a deeper meaning than their original setting conveys:

"'Tis as easy now for the heart to be true  
As for grass to be green or skies to be blue—  
'T is the natural way of living."

## VII.

# CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

## CHAPTER II. 13-21.

For, verily, beneath the tranquil surface of this Gospel, which is filled to so great an extent with what the Lord Himself said, are deep and fervid ocean-currents of holy life and love, which no one can undertake to explore and describe without being made to feel the dimness of His vision and the feebleness of His speech.—*Hovey*.

### Work in Jerusalem—Commenced.

THE dark picture placed over against the bright, festal scene described in the former part of the chapter. Typical of John's method of artistic contrast and balance, of which he gives several striking instances. (1) The first of a series of episodes related by our author which, equally with His miracles, manifest the glory of Christ. (2) Compare this account with the similar event which occurred during the last Passover of Christ's ministry. Sufficient reasons for believing that the events are not identical. If they are one, either John or the other writers were in error as to chronology. The difficulty of believing that the temple was twice cleansed not great. The evil had a chance to return after the first spasm of reform had spent itself. Jesus would again express His indignation if this occurred. He would thus signalize both the beginning and the end of His ministry by an exhibition of the Messianic authority of His office. Differences in details also mark the two accounts. (Matt. xxi; Mark xi; Luke xix.) The words of Jesus on the two occasions are different. The situations are different. His own thought is apparently different. (3) The significance of this event as the opening or inauguration of Christ's public ministry. In Jerusalem, at the temple.

probably on the eve of the Passover. Here are foreshadowed Christ's authority, mission, enthusiasm, self-devotion. Also in bold relief the criticism and unbelief of His enemies, together with the deepening belief of His disciples. Here also anticipations of His rejection by the authorities and the destruction of the temple of His body.

### I. THE IMPRESSIVE ACT (14-17).

**I. The Provocation (14).** The profanation of the Temple. The situation. Temple had three holy courts: that of the priests, which enclosed the sanctuary or temple proper; east of this the court of the men; east of this the court of the women. Around these courts was a vast open space, fourteen acres in extent, and separated from the inner courts by a wall breast high, and bearing warnings which prohibited encroachment of the Gentiles on pain of death. This outermost space was enclosed on four sides by colonnades, and was called the court of the Gentiles, the only part of the sacred place into which proselytes might enter. Here has been established by the connivance of the authorities a market or exchange, occupied by cattle dealers, sellers of doves, and money-changers. There were reasons for regarding this a legitimate convenience. Worshipers coming from a distance found it an accommodation to obtain here what they required for sacrifice. Moreover, money-changers were necessary. The annual tax of half a shekel paid to the Temple treasury could only be paid in the sacred currency, to avoid sacrilege of using money stamped with idolatrous symbols and foreign emblems implying submission to aliens. But flagrant abuses had crept in. The poor were disgracefully cheated. An extortionate rate of exchange was charged, sometimes ten or twelve per cent. Worshipers approaching would have the serenity of devotion rudely disturbed by shouts and wrangling of the traffickers. The thing had become a sore scandal, which no one had yet been bold enough to remedy.

2. **The Revolt of Christ's Moral Sense.** Into such a scene Jesus comes. He is shocked by the sights and sounds. Can not endure the profanation of His Father's house. The Temple more to Him than to these merchandizing traders. He feels Himself responsible for the removal of this scandal, not as a mere Jew, but as the King of the Jews. He is fully conscious of His Messianic dignity. What He said about His Father's house when He was twelve years old, conversing with the doctors in this very place. (Luke ii, 49.) Possibly some who heard Him now, had listened to Him then. Thoughts of His mind somewhat different on the two occasions. He will now assert His authority.
3. **His Dramatic Attack (15, 16).** Not content with mere denunciation, He accompanies His words with a symbolic action. Twists together a scourge and wields it above His head. Does not probably use it on the backs of the traders. The physical act would be disproportionate to the result. He prevails not because of blows, but because the consciences of the sinners yield to His authoritative manner. (1) The audacity of the deed. Find illustrative parallels in history. (2) His justification. The disciples remember a passage of Scripture (Psa. lxxix, 9), and apply it at once in their minds. His righteous indignation. The pious zeal of the Master. He could do nothing less. A bad thing requires a drastic remedy. Just when every Jew is purifying himself for the feast, Jesus in the exercise of His Messianic rights will purify the Temple, His Father's house.

## II. THE CONSEQUENCES (18-22).

1. **An Explanation Demanded (18).** The natural consternation of the temple authorities. Who is this invader of our privileges? How will He authenticate His deed? "What sign showest Thou unto us?" they ask. Characteristic of the Pharisees, who could never apparently see that Christ's works and words

were self-authenticating, as John is always contending. They were His sufficient credentials. The profane crowd falling back before the calm majesty of Christ an adequate evidence of His authority.

2. **Christ's Enigmatical Response (19, 20).** Why given in such a form? Not intended to be understood. Christ never works a wonder to satisfy curiosity. Used as an accusation against Him at the end of His life. (Matt. xxvi, 61; Mark xiv, 58.) They misunderstood His meaning. Preposterous, they feel, that He should be able to raise up this temple, which had already been forty-six years building, in three days. Find other illustrations of both ignorant and willful misunderstanding on the part of Christ's enemies.
3. **Interpretation of the Response (21).** John gives it himself. No occasion to look farther. 'The temple of His body.' A deep and significant response.
4. **Subsequent Effect on the Disciples (22).** After Christ's resurrection they remembered this day, and its great utterance. Their faith confirmed. Their conviction of Christ's true character deepened.



### The Finest Temple in the World.

*"He spake of the temple of His body."*—JOHN ii, 21.

Said Novalis: "There is but one temple in the world, and that is the body of man. Nothing is holier than this high form. Bending before men is reverence done to this revelation in the flesh. We touch Heaven when we lay our hands on a human body." That conception has the flavor of novelty in the minds of too many persons, but it was not original with Novalis. Jesus "spake of the temple of His body," and He was probably the first in human history to employ that impressive figure of speech. The ancients had regarded the body as the seat of evil and the most obstinate enemy of a righteous life. Two schools of philosophy had long been contending for universal patronage when Jesus appeared among men: the Epicurean, which taught that the sensations were all that could be reckoned in man, and whose founder placed over the portal of his garden where he instructed his disciples the words, "Here pleasure is the highest good;" and the Stoics, who taught that all the instincts of nature were to be crushed and effaced until the individual had been reduced to a perfect state of apathy. From neither of these doctrines could an exalted estimate of the dignity of the human body be expected. But Jesus "spake of the *temple* of His body."

The persistence of wrong conceptions of human life is remarkable. The Epicureans and Stoics have their representatives among us to this day. On the one hand are the lovers of fleshly indulgence, who find their highest good in the excitements of the flesh, in meat and drink, in diversions and sports; and on the other hand are the ascetics, who frown at all pleasure, suffocate every natural propensity, deny themselves all gratification of the physical appetites, and take a melancholy satisfaction in every kind of self-suppression. In each of these cases the body is abused. In the one instance it is debased by sensuality, in the other it is disgraced by con-

tempt. The roué, the debauché, the libertine, the frivolous devotee of pleasure show us the wickedness of the one; the hermit, the anchorite, the Hindu fakir who starves and shrivels his body to prove his saintliness, men like Simeon Stylites who undergo voluntary suffering to subordinate the body to the spirit, show us the folly of the other. But Jesus "spake of the *temple* of His body."

The temple, observe, must neither be profaned by wickedness nor disgraced by idleness. It is to be used, and to be used for a holy purpose. It is the shrine in which God desires to reside. That fact imparts the highest dignity to human life. Men have often been willing to give God a share of their being, but in the thought of Jesus the body is the actual temple of God. That conception has been worked out with much fidelity by the apostle Paul, who reminds his readers repeatedly that they are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and that to profane their bodies is the most deadly species of sacrilege. (1 Cor. iii, 16; vi, 19, 20; 2 Cor. vi, 16.) The idea is now a part of the common belief of Christians, and is for that reason in danger of losing its majestic power. For, as Coleridge well says: "Truths, of all others the most awful and interesting, are too often considered as so true, that they lose all the power of truth, and lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors."



A local habitation for God is a conception at which philosophy may sneer, but which the limitations of the finite mind seem to require, not only in the infancy of the race, but in the most progressive stages of human development. The declaration that God is everywhere, while it fills the soul with wonder and awe, is disposed to turn the mind to Pantheism—the theory that God is everything—or to an abstraction which virtually asserts that God is nothing. An accommodation to the needs of man's thought has been made in the divine revelation. The fiery, cloudy pillar, ever lifting its majestic form above the moving hosts of Israel, became to them the

visible habitation of Jehovah, toward which they constantly turned their eyes and their supplications. The Tabernacle, with its sacred furniture and its holy shrine, became in due season the tangible abode of the living God, toward which Israel directed pious thoughts and heavenly aspirations. The glittering Temple which superseded the Tabernacle, rising with matchless splendor from Mount Moriah, at length became the local habitation of that God who through many centuries of warfare had finally led His people to a fixed national existence. Without a visible temple men have instinctively lifted their faces upward and away from the earthly wilderness to that Holy of Holies above the clouds, from the glories of which we are separated by the thin veil of the flesh. But with the advent of Jesus Christ came a new revelation. The cloudy pillar has faded into invisibility. The Tabernacle has moved beyond human ken. The veil of the Temple has been rent in twain, and God has chosen humanity for His visible habitation. The irresistible proof of God's existence is that "He dwelleth in us."



The dignity thus conferred upon humanity is incomparably great. Upon the ancient Tabernacle, under the constraint of Divine inspiration, the largest wealth which a nomad people could command was piously bestowed. A single piece of its furniture—the golden candlestick—has been computed at a value of not less than \$25,000, while the whole structure has been estimated at \$1,250,000. Such honor did God desire to impart to His visible abode. The magnificence of Solomon's Temple, with its cedars from the forests of Lebanon, its walls of vast hewn-stone faced with gold, its ceilings of fir-trees, its pillars of brass, its sacred vessels of gold, its rich hangings, its golden pavements, its gorgeous ceremonies, its lavish sacrifices, is memorable above any building in the world. Costly sanctuaries still have their office in religious worship. Vast cathedrals yet eloquently proclaim the sovereignty and holiness of God. But they are only symbols of the sublimer temples in which Deity is en-

shrined. Not all the religious sects in the world could justly point to an edifice on which they had bestowed incalculable treasures of money and genius as the supreme temple of God. Cleansed humanity now enjoys greater distinction than could be conceived to invest the old Tabernacle, the Temple at Jerusalem, and the noblest ecclesiastical structures of all time. It is not without commendable reverence that men walk with bowed heads through the solemn aisles of great temples, adorned with every enrichment which human genius prompted by simple devotion can provide. But with how much profounder veneration ought we to regard renewed humanity, since more truly in this temple of clay than in any sculptured pile God dwells and pours forth His glory.



The responsibility of caring for such a temple of the Lord is commensurate with the dignity thus conferred upon men. With what appropriate jealousy did the ancient Jew defend his temple against the encroachments of unholy men. When Ptolemy Philopator entered Jerusalem, after having subdued Judea, and attempted to force his way into the sanctuary, he was repelled by Simon the high priest. But when the profane conqueror still persisted, and seemed likely to accomplish his wicked purpose, the whole city gave itself up to such a tumult of wailing that the very walls and pavements seemed to shriek out their protest against the proposed sacrilege, and Ptolemy, seized with an extraordinary awe and horror, trembled like a reed before the wind, and fell speechless to the earth. No records are more replete with narratives of daring and sacrifice than those which recite the constant struggle maintained by the Jews against their enemies, in that last period of their history before the advent of Jesus, to prevent the spoliation of their temple. Many are the instances in which they surrendered their lives with the glorious satisfaction of martyrs in defense of the holy place. Such an enthusiasm for the sanctity of the human temple ought to characterize every Christian.

Alas! what numerous foes attempt to despoil the sanctuary of the Holy Ghost! Through the gateway of the eye, which is calculated to be the avenue of approach for the beautiful and the pure, may throng evil impressions enough in one hour to degrade a soul forever. Through the open portals of the ear may surge a legion of devils to despoil the purity of life. Through all the senses of the body and all the highways of the mind the lust of the world and the pride of life make their baleful entrance. What powers of defense, what dauntlessness of spirit, are required to protect the temple of God!



History tells us that when Hyrcanus had failed in his ambitious schemes he fled beyond the Jordan, and at a place not far from Heshbon erected a great castle made of white marble. This he adorned without and within in the most sumptuous manner, and surrounded it with a deep fosse. But not one of the doors of entrance or communication was wider than would admit one man at a time, lest the master should be surprised by his enemies. At each of these approaches a faithful warder could be stationed, and the owner of the stronghold might thus rest in almost perfect security. Would that men could thus shut themselves against the surprises of sinful propensities played upon by the seductions of the flesh, and be protected from the powers of ill that are all abroad. But this is impossible. We are in the world, and here must we tarry until God removes us to an atmosphere of unsullied purity. Meanwhile let it be our anxious care that every entrance to the inner life be guarded against the least approach of sin. And this will be no small task, for the Adversary of souls is eager to usurp the throne of the Most High. He is "the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God. or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

When Antiochus Epiphanes, one of the most dastardly characters in history, captured the city of Jeru-

saalem he entered every court of the temple, pillaged the treasury, seized all the sacred utensils, the golden candlestick, the table of shew-bread and the altar of incense. He then commanded a great sow to be sacrificed upon the altar of burnt-offering, a part of the flesh to be boiled and the liquor from the unclean animal to be sprinkled over every portion of the temple; and thus he desecrated with the most horrid defilement the sacred place which for centuries had been considered by the Hebrews the holiest spot in all the universe. Two years later the sanctuary which had always been regarded the dwelling place of Jehovah, and sacred alone to Him, was dedicated by the authority of this infamous man to the pagan god Jupiter Olympius, and a statue of that deity was erected upon the altar of burnt-offering. Thus would Satan sweep into the sacred enclosure of the soul and defile it with his own pestilential presence. And such a flagrant profanation he accomplishes in every degraded human character. Not in an hour or a day is this kind of destruction completed, but by slow and steady reaches into the center of the soul's sanctity is the dreadful ruin achieved. Let the first approach of the seducer be repelled. No compromise is permissible.



But, if into any life influences of evil have begun to creep, there is a Power by whom the temple may be cleansed. The Spirit of God, whose sovereignty in the bosom of Jesus made it possible for the Master to drive the sacrilegious horde from the Father's house, which they had turned into a den of thieves, if appealed to in any exigency, will swiftly sweep the despoiler from the temple of clay.

Doré's great picture of the punishment of Heliodorus, who was dispatched by King Seleucus to capture the incalculable treasures which were laid up in the Jewish Temple, will illustrate the vengeance which God will mete out to the enemies of purity. Though the whole city was in an agony of apprehension, and the high priest was in the deepest distress, the royal officer ad-



vanced to plunder the splendid temple. Suddenly a horse with a terrible rider, clad in golden armor, rushed into the courts and trampled upon Heliodorus with his forefeet. Two young men of great strength and beauty, and gloriously attired, stood by the rider and scourged the intruder with great violence. At the sight of the awful apparition Heliodorus fell half-dead upon the pavement, and was carried senseless from the precincts of the sanctuary. Thus, so tradition has it, by supernatural interposition was the holy temple delivered of its defiler. Thus we may be assured by Divine help, if God be invoked, shall iniquity be expelled from the life it has seized for destruction.



The body of Jesus is the archetype of every renewed human life. "He spake of the temple of His body." He was conscious of the Divine presence. It is the privilege of every man to be joyously aware of the same sublime possession. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Augustine says, "Dost thou wish to pray in a temple? Pray in thyself. But first *be* a temple of God." Faber's lines express the immeasurable truth, which every Christian may realize for himself:

But God is never so far off  
     As even to be near.  
 He is within; our spirit is  
     The Home He holds most dear.

To think of Him as by our side  
     Is almost as untrue  
 As to remove His throne beyond  
     Those skies of starry blue.

So all the while I thought myself  
     Homeless, forlorn, and weary,  
 Missing my joy I walk the earth,  
     Myself God's sanctuary.



## VIII.

### INTERVIEW WITH NICODEMUS.

#### CHAPTER II. 23—III. 21.

The Gospel of the world, resolving reason into intuition and faith into sight.—*Westcott.*

#### Work in Jerusalem—Continued.

John prefaces this episode with a statement of the general situation in Jerusalem after the cleansing of the Temple (ii, 23-25). The interview with Nicodemus which follows is a particular instance of the effects produced by the works of Jesus in the capital. It illustrates also the mental attitude of the best Jews in the city. It affords a fine example of Christ's discourses with individuals. With it may be profitably compared the interview with the Samaritan woman in Chapter IV.

1. **Time and Occasion.** In Jerusalem, at the Passover, during the Feast. The whole people are assembled in greater numbers than at any other time of the year, and at the place which God had chosen. Anniversary of the birth of the nation. Celebration both patriotic and religious. Opportune time for a manifestation of Christ's glory. "Many believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did" (23).

2. **A False Faith.** They were disposed to believe they had found the Messiah, but they grounded their faith in Christ's supernatural works, not in the character of His person. The "signs" which He was habitually performing impressed them, but the faith which rested on marvels would fail when the marvels were discontinued. Consider the relative value of mir-

acles in our own day as an attestation of the divinity of Christ.

3. **The Distrust of Jesus (24).** Jesus did not "commit" Himself. Same word translated "believe" in verse 23. A justifiable rendering would be: "Many trusted in His name, . . . but He did not trust them." Compare Chap. vi, 14, where Jesus declined the homage of people springing from false hopes and beliefs, also Matt. vii, 21-23. This faith arose out of astonishment. True faith is inward and moral.
4. **The Insight of Jesus (24, 25).** "He knew what was in man." Instances of His superior knowledge: Peter (i, 42); Nathanael (i, 47, 48); Nicodemus (iii, 3); Samaritan woman (iv, 29); Disciples (vi, 61, 64); Judas (vi, 70; xiii, 11); Thomas (xx, 27); Peter (xiii, 38; xxi, 17). The Creator knew His creatures, and needed no one to instruct Him. Perhaps John lays no emphasis here upon the omniscience of Jesus, but implies that His supernatural knowledge was in a measure analogous to our own.

#### THE CONVERSATION CONCERNING THE KINGDOM (iii, 1-21).

Two queries have arisen touching this passage, viz.: Have we here the exact language of Jesus where He is reported as speaking, and is the latter portion of this discourse the speech of Christ, or the comment of John? In reply to the first it may be said, that certain utterances are so far above the intelligence of man that they could not have been invented, and are so sharp and sententious that they could not have been forgotten when once heard. There is also the fact of inspiration to be taken into account. See John xiv, 26. Yet the personality of the writer was not effaced by inspiration, and the record may have been colored in some degree by John's literary style. But it is to be remembered that one so close to Jesus as was John would inevitably acquire the Master's modes of expression,

and would thus naturally report Him with great verbal fidelity. As to the second query, it has been held by some that this passage consists of two parts: first, the actual conversation of Christ with Nicodemus (1-15); second, the commentary of John upon this conversation (16-21). Others contend that Jesus is speaking throughout. It seems improbable that John would change from Christ's words to his own without marking the transition in some plain way. It is at least permissible to divide the passage into two portions: first, the conversation about the new birth; and second, the relation of Christ's person to this doctrine.

### I. THE NEW BIRTH (1-12).

This is the first of those discourses, both private and public, which form so important a part in this gospel, and which constitute one of its finest characteristics.

1. **The Interlocutor's Position (1).** Nicodemus an excellent example of those who had a certain measure of faith in Jesus because of His miracles. Jesus reads Him without an interpreter, as John has already declared He can do with any man. Jesus did not trust Himself to him at the first, though in the course of the interview He did unveil Himself to a great degree, in consequence of which we have a wonderful deliverance on a most fundamental theme.
2. **His Plausible Approach (2).** A certain amount of complacency in His manner. Begins with a compliment. May have been influenced by the report which the deputation from the Sanhedrin had brought back from their visit to John the Baptist. Admits that Jesus is entitled to the name "rabbi," not technically, of course, as He has not pursued the rabbinical curriculum, but evidencing a kind of divine authentication. The common people, it might be presumed, would misunderstand Him, but the Pharisees would

perceive the significance of His work, and were not unkindly disposed toward Him.

3. **Christ's Check (3).** He is perhaps shocked at the ruler's lack of spiritual insight. Christ has not come to continue the old order, but to establish a new one. Therefore breaks in upon the placidity of Nicodemus with His "Verily, verily, I say unto you." Birth from above is the prerequisite for entrance into the kingdom. "From above" instead of "again," say scholars generally. Thrice elsewhere John uses the word in this sense, and it is natural to suppose he does here, and this meaning accords with the phrase "born of God" in i, 13. It is possible, however, to render it, "from the beginning," "anew," "afresh." In any case a new start is signified, without which even perception of the kingdom of God is impossible, much less entrance into it. This is philosophical; for, since the kingdom is spiritual, our natural powers can not apprehend it. The phrase, "kingdom of God," occurs only once in this gospel, here and in verse 5, though it is very common in the others. Probably the exact phrase used by Christ on this occasion. It signifies the theocracy, "the new state of salvation." (*Plummer.*) Jesus, not a mere enthusiast, seeking followers, or he would not have turned so valuable a prospective adherent aside with the declaration that he who believes merely on the strength of miracles can not see the kingdom of God.
4. **The Ruler's Attempt to Parry (4).** Did Nicodemus ask this question for the purpose of reducing Christ's statement to an absurdity? Or, not knowing what to say, did he propound a foolish inquiry? Or did he honestly desire to bring out the amazing difficulties of the doctrine? New birth as a figure of regeneration was not unknown to such a man. Still the problem is a great mystery. It is impossible to conceive of a physical rebirth; is it easier to think of a spiritual rebirth? Can a man's whole life be altered at one stroke?

5. **Christ's Reaffirmation (5).** "Verily, verily" always introduces some profound truth drawn from Christ's inner divine consciousness. "Water and spirit" typify purification and spiritual quickening; one an external act involving an internal change—baptism and repentance—the other an internal operation involving external changes—the vitalizing of the Holy Spirit, which will manifest itself in an altered life. Without these two in reality no man can enter the kingdom of God. No exclusive dependence upon a rite or ordinance is suggested, however, as the case of the penitent thief on the cross will show.
6. **The Rational Ground of the Doctrine (6-8).** To the "flesh" belongs all that constitutes the life of sensation. That life is tainted with sinful inheritances and propensities. What is received from above is a nature essentially spiritual and endowed with heavenly aspirations and capacities. The one can not pass into the other. There must be a birth from above. Nicodemus does not understand the Spirit's activity. The mysteriousness of this process is no reason for discrediting it, any more than the inexplicable operations of nature make them incredible. Christ's illustration perhaps suggested by the wind swirling through the streets of Jerusalem, the sound of which reaches their ears. The evidence of the mysterious working of the Spirit is found in the effects produced in human lives.
7. **The Puzzled Ruler (9-12).** Bewildered but silent, impressed but unconvinced. "Perhaps, perhaps, but how?" Jesus professes amazement at this. The Jewish theology, in which Nicodemus is presumed to be instructed, ought to have prepared him for such a doctrine. If this teaching, which refers to things occurring on earth, though proceeding from above, is incomprehensible, what will the teaching of deeper things concerning eternal life be to him?

**II. RELATION OF CHRIST'S PERSON TO THIS DOCTRINE**  
(13-21).

1. **The Source of This Teaching.** The Son of man, who though He was in heaven has descended to the earth to bring this knowledge to men (13).
2. **The Nature of His Mission.** He must be lifted up, as Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, that men may look on Him and have eternal life (14, 15).
3. **The Motive of This Mission.** Divine love for humanity; a passion for the salvation of men which will not stop short of the utmost expenditure (16).
4. **Its Historic Completion (17-19).** The advent of Christ to be the Savior of men, who will believe in Him unto eternal life. This life is awarded not to those who merely believe in "signs," but to those who trust in the crucified Messiah.
5. **Cause of Apparent Failure.** Men love darkness rather than light when their deeds are evil. Those who are evil shun the light because they do not wish to have their wickedness exposed. Those who are good seek the light because they wish their deeds to be made manifest as inspired of God (20, 21).

### The Secret of the Kingdom.

*"Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"—JOHN iii, 10.*

Boswell informs us that he once asked Johnson if there was good conversation at a dinner which the great man had attended the preceding day. "No, sir," said Johnson, "we had talk enough, but no conversation—there was nothing discussed."

In the interview which forms the basis of our present meditation there was a serious attempt at discussion by one of the parties to the conversation, who quickly found it necessary to drop into the position of a pupil receiving instruction from a master.

Many of Christ's most wonderful messages were delivered in the colloquial form. It is customary to characterize Jesus as a great preacher, and to ascribe to Him the temperament of the orator and the instincts of the poet. For such assertions there is ample justification in the published words of our Lord. But He was essentially a talker with men. While some of His utterances are so arranged as to give the appearance of connected discourse, scarcely any of these fulfills the requirements of set speech, with logical framework, systematic development, and rhetorical conclusion; and they were described by the speaker himself as "these sayings of mine."

Fortunately the professional interviewer did not ply his art in Christ's day, or we might be puzzled with distorted narratives of the Master's conversations. Public men in our time are constantly protesting that the zealous reporter has placed on their lips language they never dreamed of uttering and sentiments which they do not entertain. The case might have been no less disturbing if we had received formal accounts of the conversations of Jesus. But the evangelists have apparently preserved for us the residuum which memory strained off from the mass of Christ's deliverances to which they listened, the Holy Spirit having guided their minds to make such a



selection of the Master's words as should be sufficient for our instruction.

There is obviously no attempt to secure the effect of climax. Whatever dramatic power is apparent in Christ's conversations springs from the subject matter and the circumstances under which it was delivered. There is such evident artlessness in the form of these interviews as to make it impossible for us to suppose they were arranged with a view to their effect upon those who should afterward read them. In the conversation before us we have the setting forth of one of the great fundamental doctrines of our faith. To feel the spirit of the occasion and to enter into the meaning of Christ's discourse, let us examine the situation out of which this colloquy ensued.



The dignitary who came to see Jesus was a person of great significance. "There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews." The fact of his ecclesiastical position is announced before his name is given, as though it were a matter of large moment, and indeed it is a thing which must be kept constantly before our minds. According to the conception of the Pharisees, every Jew who was a true Israelite, exhibiting the legal virtues in his life, possessed in this fact the right of membership in the Messianic Kingdom, an institution which they fancied would be the old theocracy restored with all its material power and circumstantial glory. Possibly Nicodemus suspected that if Jesus were not the predicted Messiah, He was at least the harbinger of the anticipated revolution out of which the new kingdom would issue. Jesus was under the scrutiny of the Pharisees who were secretly studying His personality and pretensions. They would come to no determination touching His claims until they had made an exhaustive investigation of His words and works, but Nicodemus resolved to ascertain for himself, by a personal interview with Jesus, both the real character of the man and the probability of the success or failure of His mission.

As a member of the Sanhedrin, a man of wealth and

influence, belonging, as one might say, to the supreme court of the Jewish people, the functions of which were both civil and ecclesiastical, he was in a position to help or hinder the cause of the new leader of his people. He would cautiously inquire into the methods of this Galilean peasant-prophet; he would estimate the worth of the man. If he were convinced that the plans of Jesus were sane, and gave any promise of success, he would quietly attach himself to the movement which Jesus was inaugurating, and would then render to Him such advice as his age and experience qualified him to proffer.



Under cover of darkness Nicodemus makes his way to the place where Jesus is being entertained. This fact has sometimes been used to prove him a coward—a charge which can not be justly brought against him. A man who would risk his position by seeking an interview with Jesus, under any circumstance; a man who protested at a later day that Jesus ought not to be condemned to death without a proper trial; a man who, when Jesus had been crucified as an enemy to the State, dared to join with Joseph of Arimathea in securing for the dead agitator an honorable burial, can not reasonably be denounced as craven in spirit. He simply exercises the natural caution of a public man whose every word and deed passes under the scrutiny of the authorities.

It is the Passover Week and Jerusalem is crowded with people from all parts of Palestine. We may suppose it to be a windy night from the figurative allusion subsequently made by Jesus. The Passover moon is flooding the city with its silvery tide. The venerable ruler of the Jews partially conceals his face in the folds of his mantle, and hurries on as unostentatiously as possible to the place where Jesus is staying. We can see him climbing up the outer staircase which leads to the upper room set apart as a guest chamber in an Oriental house. We can fancy the salutations which occur as Nicodemus enters the place, and we can feel deeply the dramatic intensity of the

moment when the grave and reverend ruler confronts the youthful, but serene peasant of Galilee, who shows in the calm depth of His placid countenance the steady purpose of a soul inspired by a sublime mission. The scene is an impressive one, and if Nicodemus could have realized its significance his first utterance would have halted on his lips.

Once when a company of congenial spirits were discussing their probable sensations if some of the greatest characters who formerly lived among men should enter their presence, Charles Lamb stammered out: "You see, if Shakespeare came into this room, we should all arise; if Christ appeared, we should all kneel." Every devout person who acknowledges the true quality of Christ's person will sympathize with this beautiful sentiment, but to Nicodemus Jesus bore no marks of divinity. Nevertheless the venerable man is compelled to acknowledge the superiority of the person whom he has essayed to interrogate. He therefore opens the conversation by a gentle recognition of the power which Jesus had been exercising in His extraordinary way. "We know that Thou art a teacher come from God, O Master, for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest except God be with him. Of course, you have not been trained in the schools, and you occupy no official position, but you have an authority which is higher than any which these can give. You have an unquestionably Divine attestation."

At this point Jesus interrupts. He is not offended at what may seem to be an attempt to flatter Him, for Nicodemus has not undertaken to patronize the Master by words of studied adulation; he is simply expressing in terms of moderation a certain deference for the remarkable Person whose wonderful works have been brought to his attention. But Jesus knows that the conceptions of the kingdom of God which exist in the mind of Nicodemus are constructed upon those traditions which the teachers of Israel have for centuries been propagating; and He virtually says to the ruler of the Jews: "My dear sir, you are not in a position to enter the kingdom

of God, you do not even understand this kingdom; in fact, you can not perceive the kingdom of God. Before you can have any just notion of this kingdom you will need to be born again. It will be necessary for you to begin life anew. The kingdom of God can not be inherited; the fact that you belong to the aristocracy of the Hebrews does not entitle you to membership in the kingdom. You can not buy the kingdom; you can not earn the kingdom. There is no necessary relation between the political drama which you have conceived and the kingdom of God. Your very nature must be transformed before you can have any sympathy with the kingdom of God. You must be born again."



How many people living in our own time require a similar readjustment of their views concerning the kingdom of God? They imagine that this kingdom is to be established by some kind of revolution. They can not see that midnight meetings to plan an overthrow of existing conditions are utterly abortive, or that the use of material agents is perfectly futile. Like Maxim Gorky, and men of his ilk, who are unwilling to see in any concession of the Russian autocracy an approximation to liberty which may eventually lead to the freedom of their people, they fail to discover that by a quiet, persistent influence the kingdom of God is finally to prevail. That kingdom does not come by observation. It is not set up as a consequence of insurrection. It does not emerge from a tumult. Jesus was compelled constantly to insist on the unobtrusive, continuous influence of His kingdom. The figure of the leaven which a woman hid in the dough she was fashioning into bread was intended to fasten this principle in the minds of Christ's disciples. There are persons who fancy that some swift, radical cataclysm must suddenly thrust the kingdom of God as a conquering power upon the world. Nothing can be more foreign to the genius of our religion.

Such persons need to be reminded that mere externals have little to do with the real kingdom. We could go

on erecting vast structures of ecclesiastical authority, and never by this means usher in the kingdom of God with power. Protestants are deluded by the fallacy we are considering. They are frightened at the spreading of the Roman communion. They see its political power—its wisdom in the building of churches and schools, its skill in seizing upon strategic points, and they covet this ability and astuteness, and wish that Protestantism could emulate this example. But we might capture the seats of all governments, plant universities in all capitals, put our hands on all the sources and secrets of statecraft, lay hold of all the treasures of the earth in the name of Christianity, compel all the nations of men to acknowledge our sovereignty, yet not have the kingdom of God. The kingdom is one of spiritual ideals and spiritual achievements. A lot of rude huts strung along the Ganges, filled with Hindus serving God out of pure hearts, would come nearer to being the kingdom of God than an aggregation of costly cathedrals, shining with precious gems, filled with fragrant incense, but devoid of spiritual power, and mere monuments of ecclesiastical authority.



If men can not *see* the kingdom of God which “is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,” it is very evident that they can not *enter* the kingdom of God. That specific qualification is essential to perceiving the kingdom of God is in harmony with the very constitution of human life. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, as all things of a finer essence are only understood by those who are themselves refined. That a man is an excellent blacksmith does not qualify him to appreciate the music of Beethoven, or the pictures of Raphael, or the poetry of Homer. There is a vast difference in the power of souls to appreciate the larger and deeper revelations of beauty in nature and in art. Superficial persons will gaze upon some wonder of creation, such as a towering mountain, or the majestic ocean, or a vast abyss, and express their ad-

miration in terms so puerile as to show that their emotions are as light as foam. But a great scientist like Sir David Brewster, looking upon the wing of a tiny insect, will exclaim, "O God, how marvelous are Thy works!"

A woman was one day discussing with a man the probable meaning of one of the most obscure passages in the works of Robert Browning. The man contended that his interpretation must be correct, since he was on terms of intimacy with the poet, and understood his spirit and motive. This the woman was at length willing to admit, but when the man reproached her with the childishness of her faith in the teachings of Christianity, she retorted: "You must remember that I know the Author of the Christian religion, and can therefore understand His teachings as no stranger can." It does not tax one's intelligence therefore to accept the statement of Jesus that no man can understand the kingdom of God until by some spiritual transformation he has come into harmony with the inner life of that kingdom. "Ye must be born again," is the most logical thing Jesus could have told Nicodemus, if the ruler of the Jews was sincere in his purpose to ally himself with the kingdom of God.



"How can a man be born again? You certainly can not mean a second natural birth; that is plainly an absurdity," exclaims Nicodemus. "Nevertheless," responds Jesus, "I mean precisely what I say; except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he can not enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Until the fleshly life has been by Divine power transformed into a spiritual life there can be no entrance into the kingdom." Nicodemus need not to have been unduly astonished at this reference to water and the spirit. He was fairly familiar with the baptism of John. He knew that the sacred rite performed by the prophet of the Jordan was a symbol of repentance, without which act of turning away from sin there could be no acceptance with God. No ultra-Protestants could believe that the touching of



our persons with water, accompanied by some verbal formula, would be effective in re-creating our moral natures; but we can easily credit a statement, that without the penitence which is assumed to attend the act of baptism, there could be no regeneration of life; and, that the vital touch of the Divine Spirit is essential to the quickening of new impulses, the creating of new aspirations, and the producing of a changed life, is a proposition which we can receive without the slightest hesitation, and which Nicodemus ought to have apprehended without difficulty.

We know that our trend is not uniformly toward God. Frequently our fleshly nature swings us in the direction of evil, and we find it more congenial to our tastes to yield to temptation than to resist the suggestion of the lower life, until we have been regenerated by Divine grace, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and filled with power of God. It is this transformed life which constitutes the ability to perceive, and the privilege to enter, the kingdom of God. The old self must be abandoned, the old sins obliterated, the old man crucified, the old nature cleansed. Then the kingdom will possess us.

A frightfully wicked woman working in one of the great paper mills of Glasgow was converted through the efforts of a city missionary, and became a person of great devoutness of character. She described the process of her salvation in these terms: "I was like the rags that go into the paper mill. They are torn and filthy, but they come out clear, white paper. That is like what Jesus is doing for me." That is, indeed, the work which the great Redeemer is doing for millions of our race. That is the method by which the kingdom of God is being made triumphant in the earth.



## IX.

# FINAL TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

## CHAPTER III. 22-36.

These brief sentences . . . as inexhaustible in thought as they are inartificial in language.—*Maclaren*.

### Work in Judea.

Repelled by the authorities in the Temple, finding little promise in the city, Jesus withdraws to the rural part of Judea, and tarries awhile with His disciples before retreating into Galilee. Under such circumstances occurs the final and self-effacing testimony of John the Baptist.

#### 1. The Occasion of the Testimony (22-26).

(1) *Apparent Competition of Jesus and John the Baptist* (23, 24). The disciples of Jesus were baptizing, not the Master (iv, 2), He was baptizing through His disciples. Meanwhile John continues his own work. He had noticed that Jesus had not proceeded to assert His Messianic authority, and therefore felt that his own mission was not yet completed. Hence he went on baptizing unto repentance. Probably the two companies were not far apart. The location of Ænon has not been perfectly identified. "John was not yet cast into prison," is a sidelight on the accounts of the other evangelists.

(2) *The Discussion which Arose* (25, 26). With "a Jew" instead of "the Jews," probably, as some readings have it. The dispute may have been with re-

gard to the value of John's baptism as compared with that of Christ, touching the matter of ceremonial purification.

- (3) *Appeal to John the Baptist.* John's disciples make him referee in the case. The irritating fact is that He whom John baptized is outdoing their master. Has greater crowds, though John gave Him His vantage by introducing Him originally. Is not this an invasion of John's rights?

## 2. The Testimony Delivered (27-36).

John's testimony now differs from that originally given. Heretofore he has simply appealed to his hearers to exercise faith in Christ. Now he protests against the indifference, misunderstanding and hostility of the Jews. His testimony in this instance seems to divide into two parts: (1) About himself, "the friend of the Bridegroom." (2) About Christ, "the Bridegroom." This is not the view of some scholars, however, who think that the speech of John the Baptist closes with verse 30, and that the remainder of the passage is the comment of John the Evangelist. If there were such a separation, one would suppose that John would have indicated it in some way. The language of the latter section may be colored with the tints of the writer's mind. What is not the exact verbiage of John the Baptist is a faithful paraphrase of John the Evangelist.

### I. TESTIMONY CONCERNING HIMSELF (27-30).

1. **General Principle of Revelation (27).** A man has only such authority as comes to him from God. I can not increase my prerogatives beyond the divine bestowal. Jesus assumes no position which is not rightfully His by the ordination of God.
2. **Application of This Principle to Himself (28, 29).** He reminds His disciples that He has never claimed any higher place than that of subordination to Christ.

Despite their indignation this must always be kept in mind. His mission was purely provisional. An illustration is employed to define his meaning. He is "the friend of the Bridegroom." In the Old Testament "the Bridegroom" symbolizes the relationship between Jehovah and the chosen people. (Isa. liv, 5; Hos. ii, 19, 20.) In the New Testament it symbolizes the relationship between Christ and His Church. (Eph. v, 32; Rev. xix, 7; xxi, 2, 9. Compare Matt. ix, 15; xxv, 1.) Here "the friend of the Bridegroom" means the confidential intimate friend designated to arrange the espousals and to preside at the feast.

3. **His Mission Closed (30).** The forerunner must decrease, the heralded Messiah must increase. "No one could have invented this admirable saying, a permanent motto of every true servant of Christ." (*Godet.*) With the conclusion of his work the old dispensation came to an end.

## II. TESTIMONY CONCERNING CHRIST.

As the words, "I must decrease," have been developed in what precedes, the words, "He must increase," are developed in what follows.

1. **The primacy of Jesus (31).** A favorite theme with the Baptist. He contrasts Jesus with himself. He is of the earth, and his message is given from that point of view; Jesus is from heaven, and speaks by immediate knowledge of eternal things.
2. **The Perfection of His Teaching (32, 33).** He has existed from eternity. He testifies directly. To those who refuse Him He is of no consequence, but to those who receive Him He becomes the concrete evidence that God is true. "No man" and "all men" are hyperbolical. Christ's teachings are absolutely perfect, and those who receive His testimony will find this is so.

3. **The Fullness of His Endowment (34, 35).** Sent of God, He speaks the words of God (34). He has received the Spirit without limit. "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. ii, 9.) All things are under His control. His authority is complete.
4. **Consequences of Belief and Unbelief (36).** Faith brings eternal life; unbelief brings wrath. "Eternal life" better than "everlasting life." The wrath of God is more natural to John the Baptist than to John the Evangelist, who never uses the phrase. John the Baptist is the nexus between the old and the new dispensation. Wrath is the complement of love. God could not be a good lover without being a good hater.

#### **Facts Concerning the Baptist not in this Gospel.**

His birth and parentage (Luke i, 5-25, 57-80); Certain matter in his preaching (Matt. iii, 1-12; Mark i, 4-8; Luke iii, 1-18); His baptism of Jesus (Matt. iii, 13-17; Mark i, 9-11; Luke iii, 21, 22); His embassy to Christ to inquire if He is the real Messiah (Matt. xi, 2-6; Luke vii, 19-23); His conflict with Herod and Herodias, imprisonment and death (Matt. iv, 12; Mark i, 14; Luke iii, 19, 20; Matt. xiv, 1-12; Mark vi, 14-29); Christ's testimony to the greatness of John (Matt. xi, 7-19; xvii, 12, 13; Mark ix, 11-13; Luke vii, 24-35).

### The Motive Heroic.

*"He must increase, but I must decrease."*

—JOHN iii, 30.

"Show me a man's cradle, and I will show you his destiny," said an eminent clergyman after spending a day at the Tombs Police Court in New York. So large a proportion of the criminality there unveiled had its undoubted origin in unhallowed homes, that he felt himself justified in making this sweeping generalization. There is much reason in it, yet it is too fatalistic by half. It assigns a disproportionate place to those factors which are so greatly overworked in our modern social theory—heredity and environment. It ignores the power of self-determination, which is man's noblest endowment. It is contradicted by numerous biographies. So many persons have risen from obscurity to prominence, from squalor to affluence, from baseness to nobility, that it is unsafe to make the circumstances of birth the prophecy of any career.

Thomas Fuller observed that in the genealogical table of Jesus these facts appear: Rehoboam begat Abija, that is, a bad father had a bad son; Abija begat Asa, that is, a bad father had a good son; Asa begat Jehoshaphat, that is, a good father had a good son; Jehoshaphat begat Jehoram, that is, a good father had a bad son. On this he remarks: "I see, Lord, from hence, that my father's piety can not be entailed—that is bad news for me. But I see also that actual impiety is not always hereditary—that is good news for my son."

There is a less hazardous way of predicting destiny than to look into a cradle. Ascertain a man's dominant motive, after he has put aside the garments of childhood, and has begun to think and act for himself; discover the regulative principle of his conduct, and you will be able to make an almost infallible estimate of his future. John the Baptist had the great fortune to be born in a godly home. Of his father and mother it is written that "they were both righteous before God, walking in all the com-

mandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, summoned by the Spirit to a high task, John the Baptist began life with large advantages. It is not inconceivable, however, that he might have neutralized these by throwing off the holy influences of his home and by refusing the commission of God. Thousands of men have sold their birthright and stifled the voice of duty. Many who were born to the purple have exchanged it for rags. They have defied the obligations of heredity and environment, and wasted their substance in riotous living. John the Baptist yielded to the pressure of a Divine call, availed himself of his rich inheritance, and chose for his controlling purpose in life the exaltation of Christ, and the consequent effacement of self. The dominant principle of his conduct is phrased in the noble words, "He must increase, but I must decrease." This lofty sentiment explains the man's whole career.



The names of two great Englishmen rise in the memory as one reflects upon the close relation between a man's self-appointed purpose and the output of his character. Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, for fifty years filled a very conspicuous place in the world of letters and politics. He was the recipient of the most distinguished honors in the gift of his countrymen and his sovereign; and these emoluments it may be granted he fairly earned. His motto was, "*Forti nihil difficile*," and right valiantly did he prove by his own achievements that "nothing is hard for the brave." He inscribed this legend on his banners when he entered the arena of political strife, and embodied it in his performances throughout his eventful life. The flavor of heroism which it contains rouses the blood and quickens the pulses of sensitive youth. Five times Disraeli offered himself unsuccessfully for Parliament, but finally won the prize which his proud spirit coveted. Sneered at in the House of Commons, and laughed to silence in his earliest attempts to address that body, he persisted in

thrusting himself to the fore, until his famous prophecy—"The time is coming when you will hear me"—had ample fulfillment, and he was able to dictate terms to his adversaries. There is a brilliancy and dash in such a career which captivates the imagination and commands applause. But a deeper scrutiny of his life discloses the fact that, while Disraeli was brave, he was also selfish. The end to be served in every project was personal aggrandizement. He was as ambitious as Bonaparte, though in a somewhat different field. He was a diplomat in the less honorable sense of the term. At the beginning of his public career he shifted his policy and altered his political creed as often as he could thereby serve his own interests. He carefully planned and cruelly executed vengeance upon those who had opposed him, and when he died there were many to eulogize him for his greatness, but few to mourn him as a friend.

Just as Disraeli was rising into prominence another great Englishman was taking his departure to the invisible world. He also wrought in literature and dealt with problems of international importance, but in what a different spirit, and for what nobler results! William Carey, brooding over the map of the world, as he pursued his humble work in a cobbler's shop, and pondering the condition of the heathen millions, felt the impulse of a sublime ambition. His motto was, "Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God." Was Disraeli persistent? Carey surpassed him in the assiduity with which he persecuted his task. In the face of ecclesiastical censure, despite the protests of British conservatism and the ridicule of almost the whole people, he pushed on over land and sea until he stood upon the burning shores of India, and began his labors for the intellectual and spiritual enlightenment of her pagan populations. Without money or influence, compelled to earn his daily bread by manual toil, working seven years before he gained a single convert, he never surrendered to depression of spirit. Success finally crowned his unremitting efforts. Preaching, teaching, and translating, he touched Oriental life at every point. He was instru-



mental in putting the Scriptures into forty different vernaculars, and thus rendered the Bible accessible to three hundred millions of human beings in his day. Disraeli affected the literature of one period and of one language. Carey impressed the literature of many peoples and of all subsequent time. Disraeli adjusted temporal questions for England and the Continent. Carey entered into spiritual relations with the whole East and in the interest of the kingdom of God. Disraeli's motto made him an imposing figure in the sight of men. Carey's motto made him a person of distinction in the judgment of God.



Sir Walter Scott said: "There never did, and there never will, exist anything permanently noble and excellent in character which is a stranger to the exercise of resolute self-denial. Teach self-denial, and make its practice pleasurable, and you create for the world a destiny more sublime than ever issued from the brain of the wildest dreamer." The qualities which were developed in John the Baptist by the discipline of self-devotion confirm the wisdom and truth of this utterance. The single purpose, from which no allurements could tempt him, but the execution of which involved immense sacrifice, imparted to him a certain robustness of character impossible of attainment by ease-loving men. He was no lily-fingered prophet, coddled in luxury and schooled in conventional felicities of speech and conduct. Absorbed by one great passion, he had no time nor disposition for politic address, or studied action. He did not indulge in equivocal generalities, but spoke stalwart truth in tones vibrant with emotion. His lance was swift and sharp, and pierced the shield of pride and selfishness with no uncertain aim. What a strange figure he made, with his garment of camel's hair thrown athwart his lean body, and a leathern belt girdling his loins! But what power issued from that rugged frame, nourished by locusts and wild honey, and breathed upon by the Spirit of God! "What went ye out into wilderness to see?" asks Christ. "A reed shaken with the wind? . . . A man clothed in

soft raiment? . . . A prophet? Yea, I say unto you more than a prophet. . . . Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." To men of his ilk the world owes its deepest debt. Not the men who are swept by the currents of popular feeling, but the men who turn those currents into untried channels; not those who are produced by the spirit of the times, but those who inform the age with a new spirit; not the creatures, but the creators of public sentiment; the shaggy-raimented Elijahs, the burly Luthers, the rough-shod Cromwells, who beneath an uncouth exterior hide a star-like soul.

What courage this man exhibited! His was the bravery which is born only of profound convictions and total self-abnegation. He hurls the truth at the vast assemblies which attend his ministry with such terrific impact that soldiers and tax-gatherers and the populace generally cry out, "What shall we do then?" And to each he has not only the general exhortation, "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance," but also some specific injunction which strikes directly upon the sin peculiar to the class begging for advice. Pharisees and Sadducees alike fall under his reprobation. Though he courts death by his words, he does not hesitate to denounce the shameless Herod to his face, exclaiming, "It is not lawful for thee to have another man's wife." He reminds one of Chrysostom, saying, when Eudoxia the empress threatened him, "Go tell her I fear nothing but sin;" of Basil saying, when Valerius declared he would put him to death, "Let him do so. I shall only get to heaven the sooner;" of the Prince of Conde saying, when the French king commanded him to go to mass or he would suffer banishment or death, "As to the first of these, by the grace of God, I never will. As to the other two, I leave the choice to your majesty."



There is nothing surprising in the popularity of a man who preaches with the blood-earnestness which characterized the discourses of John the Baptist. The multi-

tudes are always eager to hear a prophet who pours forth the truth from flaming lips. But John's attractiveness was extraordinary. Chrysostom thundered his eloquent periods to audiences which crowded the church of St. Sophia to suffocation. Bourdaloue drew such throngs to his preaching that trade was interrupted in the streets of Paris adjacent to the place where he delivered his sermons. Wesley and Whitefield preached to thousands of colliers and servant girls at five o'clock in the morning. Men of unusual parts speak to vast congregations in our time. But John the Baptist seems to have exceeded in popularity the most gifted orators. Proclaiming his message along the lonely tract of the Jordan, he drew his auditors in great masses from the city to the wilderness. They abandoned the marts of trade, the haunts of pleasure, and the fellowships of home to hang eagerly upon his words. Yet he suffered no man to forget that the preacher was but the herald of a greater personage. He claimed for himself no higher distinction than this: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord." Mark Antony urged in Cæsar's behalf that thrice he had refused a kingly crown. With deeper and more sincere humility John rejected the suggestion that he acknowledge himself a person of consequence, and continued to say, "After me cometh a man who is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose." When he had once been assured that Jesus was the expected Messiah, he turned the attention of his own personal followers to the Master, and cried, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!"



A Russian woman of much intelligence remarked to an American statesman who was visiting the domain of the Czar: "It is said, you know, that Tolstoi is jealous of Christ. It will end in his trying to establish a religion of his own." The characterization may have been unjust, but it illustrates a kind of intellectual and spiritual pride which prevails among certain men of large influence in

society. The real magnitude of John's character, the full measure of his self-abnegation, are shown by the spirit with which he met the complaint of his disciples. "Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to Him!" Such was the pinched and shriveled conception of John's mission in the minds of his narrow partisans, that they were offended at what they fancied was an usurpation of his rights by a competitor. But with wondrous fidelity their master tells them that his joy is fulfilled, as his function is performed, by bringing the Bride and the Bridegroom together. He is but the friend of the Bridegroom. "He must increase, but I must decrease." It is a voluntary obscuration of self. And he has great joy in the eclipse.

Toward the close of his life Bismarck said to a friend: "I feel tired, but I am not sick. My complaint is uneasiness of life, in which I have no longer any object." The loss of his wife, the engrossment of his sons in their own pursuits, and especially his involuntary retirement from political leadership, conspired to render the life of the "man of blood and iron" aimless and empty. Sir William Napier, remembering the anniversary of the battle of Seville, where he won great honors for his valor, spoke ruefully of the decline which his vital energy had suffered, saying: "Now I am old, feeble, bent, miserable. . . . I can not read with pleasure, still less can I think or judge." To be taken out of the stress of worldly activity, to find one's occupation gone, to see one's self sup-  
planted in a congenial field, and bear the experience with equanimity, is what the fewest men are capable of doing. But John the Baptist, far from feeling any despondency as he passes into obscurity, observes the sun blotting out the morning star at the dawn of day with an exultant spirit, and cries, "He must increase, but I must decrease."



Truly this is the divine way of the Christian. What is his mission? To be good, and therefore to be happy? Nay, to be holy, and therefore self-effacing, that Christ

may be manifest. That was the joy of Paul. "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." The summit of Christian excellence is attained by that method only. The consecrated soul cries with Theodore Monod:

"Higher than the highest heaven,  
Deeper than the deepest sea,  
Lord, Thy love at last hath conquered;  
Grant me now my supplication—  
None of self, and all of Thee."

Charles Kingsley asked a young preacher who was to occupy his pulpit at Eversley to allow him to read two or three of his sermons in manuscript. When he had finished, he chose one by no means the best written, but containing an honest presentation of Jesus Christ, and said: "Preach that. There is a poor soul who will be in church, whose sins it may touch, and whose sorrows it may heal. God help us all!" The needs of humanity are so acute, and the seriousness of attending to them is so great, and the time for our ministry is so short, that it is not worth while to display our little selves. Let the Christ be magnified. "He must increase, but I must decrease."

## X.

# INTERVIEW WITH THE SAMARITAN WOMAN ; ITS RESULTS.

## CHAPTER IV. 1-42.

The Gospel of John may be called the Gospel of the Conversations, for more than any other it reports particular interviews of our Lord with individuals.—*Vose.*

### Work in Samaria.

This narrative affords a fine illustration of John's method of putting similar events with different characteristics over against one another in sharp contrast. In the preceding chapter we have the interview with Nicodemus, which bears some similarity to the interview recorded in this chapter, and yet which is strikingly different in certain respects. There is the same seizure of the immediate circumstances to form a basis of teaching—the wind in one instance, the water in the other, providing a parable through which the profounder truth can be suggested. But there is a vast difference between the characters of the chief persons in these two interviews and the conditions under which the conversations occur. The woman, a Samaritan, a sinner, is placed in contrast with the rabbi, a ruler of the Jews, a Pharisee.

The characteristics of Jesus as a conversationalist are well brought out in this narrative. It was a genuine conversation and not a monologue. In His public addresses Jesus gave ample opportunity for questions and answers. He was often interrupted by inquiries. Occasionally these betrayed an insolent spirit on the part of the interlocutors, but Jesus never showed irritation. Sometimes in the smaller circles He appeared to be tak-



ing the inferior place, but it will be noted that in such instances He really guided the conversation without seeming to do so. He was a good listener, which is the first mark of a good conversationalist, and He heard with such intelligence that His responses, as sometimes plainly asserted, were addressed to the secret thoughts of men rather than to their spoken words. This narrative naturally divides into three sections, as follows: 1. The conversation with the Samaritan woman (1-26). 2. The conversation with the puzzled disciples (27-38). 3. The confession of the Samaritans (39-42).

### I. JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN (1-26).

1. **Introduction (1-4).** First phase of Christ's public ministry ended. The results are, unbelief on the part of many, belief on the part of a few, public interest created, a general feeling of uneasiness in the hearts of the authorities. The Pharisees, having heard of His work, were more alarmed by it than by the ministry of John the Baptist. They could understand John better, for he took his position on the law, performed no miracles, and disclaimed being the Messiah. Jesus, on the other hand, claimed Messianic authority, and had little regard for tradition. His work, while only partially successful, was at least too well known to be disregarded. To avoid a premature clash with the jealous guardians of the old religion Jesus transferred His ministry to that portion of the country where the Sanhedrin exercised a less severe authority, and where the number of Gentile residents created a more liberal sentiment. The quickest way to Galilee was through Samaria. The most prejudiced Jews went around Samaria through Perea, thus crossing the Jordan twice. There was no occasion for Jesus to do this, for He did not share the bigotry of His people. On the way to Galilee He meets this Samaritan woman. Did not go through Samaria for the purpose of meeting this woman, but having met her used His opportunity most wonderfully.



2. **Conversation with the Woman (5-26).** Jesus, wearied and thirsty, sitting on the edge of the well at noonday, like any worn traveler, is a picture in harmony with John's habit of presenting the idea of Christ's complete humanity whenever opportunity arises. Compare "I thirst" (xix, 28). When Jesus asks an approaching Samaritan woman for a drink she is astonished in two particulars: first, that He should ask a woman; and second, that He should ask a Samaritan. As a woman she was lightly regarded by the leaders of sentiment. Moreover, she was poor and of unsavory reputation. Above all, she was a Samaritan. Thus prejudice against sex, nation, and character were all broken down by Christ's first ministry outside the bounds of His own territory. In her response to His request the woman rallies Jesus for His unconventional friendliness to a Samaritan woman. She thought He must be in sore distress if He could humiliate Himself enough to ask a drink of her. Study the origin and characteristics of the hostility between the Jews and Samaritans, which endures down to the present time.

Jesus now turns the woman's challenge against her, and says, "If you knew," etc. (10). What did Christ mean by living water? The surprise of the woman, who still fancies that Jesus refers to natural water. Is He greater than Jacob? Where is the well? With what will He draw water? Jesus proclaims the superiority of the water He will give in several particulars: It is a springing fountain, it is within the soul, it is eternal, it is satisfying (14). The unsatisfied sinner, perceiving that Jesus speaks of something she does not have, asks Him for help. But He probes a little deeper for her conscience, and in the words, "Go, call thy husband!" uncovers the woman's life to her own startled gaze (17, 18). Convinced that He is a prophet, she questions Him about worship (19, 20). Jesus then shifts her whole point of view (20-24), showing her that worship must be spiritual, and not merely ceremonial, and

that some day Jews and Samaritans alike will realize this. The woman acknowledges that when the Messiah has come everything will be made plain, and Jesus at once announces that He is the expected One (25, 26).

3. **Jesus as a Teacher.** In all this conversation Jesus exhibits His wonderful teaching qualities, and presents a pattern for all who attempt to inculcate truth in other minds. Observe (1) He deals as thoroughly with one person as with many, and discloses as important truth to a single listener as to a large congregation; (2) His teaching is distinctly personal. Everything turns upon the needs of this particular soul; (3) His approach is very adroit. He throws Himself upon the sympathy of the woman and gains her interest at once; (4) He proceeds from the consideration of a common physical necessity to a spiritual requirement; (5) He drives the woman back upon her conscience at a critical moment in the conversation; (6) He moves up to a sublime spiritual idea just when the woman is most sensitive, when her mind is alert, and she is quivering with the discovery of His profound spiritual insight; (7) When the woman is thus prepared for it, He reveals His own Messianic identity; He is the Christ. It is a wonderful piece of strategy in soul-winning.
4. **Observations.** How could John record this conversation unless actually present when it occurred? Did he remain with Jesus during this interview, though the other disciples had withdrawn? Notice that the difficulties in the way of approach to this woman were no hindrance to Jesus. We shall not meet any natural or artificial barriers so hard to surmount in preaching religion to our companions as Jesus found in the hostility between Jews and Samaritans. Observe that, having been convinced of the real significance of Christ and His teachings, the Samaritan woman ran away to call others to Him, including perhaps that man who was not her husband (28, 29).

## II. JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES (27-38).

1. **Their Silent Astonishment (27).** The ancient prejudice against teaching a woman. The silence of the disciples is both a tribute to their loyalty to the Master, and also an evidence of the impression which His character had made upon them.
2. **Their Lesson on Food (31-34).** Putting aside their curiosity, they proffer food with loving anxiety. In His joy Jesus does not feel the necessity of material sustenance. His resources of strength they do not understand. Their exclamation of surprise and question not evidence of unusual dullness. Other instances of like amazement occur often. "What wonder that the woman did not understand the water? The disciples did not understand the food!" (*Augustine.*)
3. **Their Lesson of the Harvest (35-38).** He sees the harvest in the mere promise of the first blades. Sowing and reaping come together with Him. It is often so with other religious teachers. But often the reapers gather what others have sown, and the sower does not reap at all. Yet all will rejoice together in the end.

## III. JESUS AND THE SAMARITANS (39-42).

The discourse with the disciples has occurred while the woman has been away in the city, calling the people. She has left her waterpot, forgetting her own material needs, and has been stirring up the citizens for their spiritual benefit. What an evangelist she was! (*a*) She brought the crowd into the presence of Jesus. (*b*) She inspired belief in their hearts by the mere recital of her experience. (*c*) When she had conducted them to Jesus, they were eager to investigate further, and persuaded Him to remain with them for awhile. (*d*) In two days the number of believers greatly increased, and the ground of faith was shifted from her testimony to their own convictions. Observe how these Samaritans

grasped the idea of Christ's mission to save the world. It is often so among the heathen of to-day. The Samaritans evidently did not require the "signs" for which the Jews were always clamoring.

### Undeveloped Possibilities.

*"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."*—JOHN iv, 35.

Whoever wishes to be most serviceable to the Kingdom of God must first look facts squarely in the face, avoiding on the one hand a too dolorous view of the religious situation, and on the other hand an unreasonably confident mood. A returned missionary was recently asked: "How long will it take at the present pace for the evangelization of Japan and its conversion to Christianity?" He replied: "Twenty millenniums will be a small allowance." Another was asked: "What, at the present pace, is the prospect of the conversion of Islam to Christianity?" He replied: "About the same as that of the completion of the Interstellar Railway from the earth to Mars." To linger too long over such assertions causes one's spirits to droop. The outlook must not be spoiled by hopelessness.

A man possessed of an intemperate optimism said not long since that the evangelization of the world was proceeding so rapidly, and converted heathen were showing themselves so ready to support their own churches, and to extend their work into adjacent regions, that Christians who desired to have any part in the missionary movement would need to contribute quickly, as the opportunity would vanish forever at an early date. His motive was excellent, but his intelligence was limited. With a comparatively small proportion of the world's population nominally Christian, with many millions more of heathen on the earth to-day than existed when the missionary enterprise took practical shape something over a century ago, there would seem to be left a problem of

no mean dimensions for the Church of to-morrow. This fact alone indicates a whitening harvest awaiting the toil and patience of consecrated laborers; for the world is everywhere accessible to the invading hosts of Christianity, and opportunity is big with promise.

But the signs of an evangelistic crisis may be discerned at closer range. When William Booth many years ago directed the attention of the Church to "the submerged tenth" of England's population, or the more than three millions of destitute and unreached creatures, who were devoid of privileges in the house of God, outcasts and beggars on the face of the earth, he presented startling evidence of a field crying for harvesters. Conditions almost as portentous, though somewhat dissimilar, exist to-day in America, where the drift of the population to the cities is fast swelling into a torrent, which apparently becomes increasingly perilous as its current is enlarged and hastened by foreign immigration. If all the people of the great cities desired to attend divine worship, the churches are too small to accommodate more than a fraction of them; but unfortunately thousands of them have no wish to enter a sanctuary. The audiences in these great centers are largely, if not entirely, composed of the prosperous and the respectable, while the poor and the needy are far from the gates of praise. Thousands of workingmen—using that term of the artisan class—are utterly alienated from the Church. Scarcely more than twenty-five per cent of the young men of the nation, between the ages of eighteen and thirty, are ever found within a place of worship; only fifteen per cent are regular in their attendance at Church; and only five per cent are actually enrolled in the membership of the Church. But young men between these ages constitute two-thirds of the criminal classes of the country, with crime showing a decided tendency to increase in many parts of the land. Misconception of the attitude of the Church toward the depressed elements in the population inspires many of those who most need its ministries with hostility to its very name. Meanwhile

sin continues to drag them down to ever deepening pits of social and moral degradation.

In Edward Bellamy's "Looking Backward," not all the doctrines of which can receive the unqualified endorsement of the wise, but some of the prophecies of which seem in a fair way to be fulfilled, the author represents himself as coming from an inspection of the misery engendered by the struggle for a livelihood in the squalid section of a great city, to a fashionable dinner party, where he is good-naturedly censured for his dullness. And when he is asked where he has been to make him so uncongenial, he replies, somewhat fiercely, "I have been to Golgotha; I have seen humanity hanging on a cross!" In too many instances the instrument of suffering endured by such persons was constructed by their own sinfulness, but in some cases they are doubtless the victims of the greed and cruelty of others. The evils of intemperance, of industrial tyranny, of commercial crookedness, of political corruption, which fester in our great cities, and which complicate the miseries of the people, provide a problem of enormous magnitude for our Christian leaders to solve. Society can only be regenerated by the salvation of its individual members, and Christ is calling for laborers in larger numbers than hitherto have answered His summons.

"What a beautiful field!" exclaimed Chalmers, as he looked upon the degraded purlieus of Edinburgh, and with the passion of his Lord he threw himself into the task of cleansing that portion of the city from its reeking vileness. Such a spirit will glorify any field of opportunity, and fill the soul with unquenchable ardor.



Apart from these acute manifestations of iniquity, there are indications enough of the requirement for enlarged evangelistic effort in the ordinary conditions of current life. Michelet said: "The great achievements of the Renaissance were the discovery of the world and the discovery of man." Thanks to the explorers, the scientists, the investigators of the universe, the world we live



in and the worlds which are neighbors to our planet have been discovered and chartered in the sea of space. The finding of man's true dignity is a work of still greater proportions. The emancipation of the individual conscience, the liberation of the intellect, the assertion of human rights under any type of social development—these are truly magnificent attainments of the modern era. But the pendulum may swing too far. Even now there are symptoms of an undue glorification of human excellence. We must not forget Pascal's pathetic words: "O, the grandeur and the littleness, the excellency and the corruption, the majesty and the meanness of man!" The prevalent sentiment apparently regards the man of the twentieth century civilization as showing no defects which education can not remove, thus making the doctrine of regeneration in order to salvation quite obsolete. This position is contrary to the observed facts of human life, and is contradicted by the universal moral consciousness. "Do n't talk to me of the natural goodness of man," said Frederick the Great, "I know the animal too well myself." Luther said, "I am more afraid of my own heart than I am of the Pope and all his councils." The words of Jeremiah are sharp, but they are warranted by the modern products of the unregenerate spirit. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." The most obvious need of human life is purification at the center.

We are building the finest cities since the dawn of history. Art is more rational and diversified than at any previous period. Music has more votaries than at any time since the morning stars sang together. Intelligence is more widely diffused than ever. Civilization is more humane, charity is more extensive, public reforms are more acceptable, and private manners are more kindly than society has ever known hitherto. Nevertheless we live in a lost world, or the mission of Christ was unnecessary, and His sacrifice a foolish waste of life. But we know that each generation springs into action tainted with the same sinful propensities; and society can never be redeemed from its failure and sorrows until it accepts



the ministrations of Christ as the sovereign remedy for its ills. Regeneration is the supreme necessity of the world, and we need not turn from our own doorstep to discover that this is so.



"Give me a hundred men," said John Wesley, "who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I will shake the world; and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen, and such alone will overthrow the kingdom of Satan and build up the kingdom of God on earth." He obtained his complement, and they justified his prediction. The demand for all times is a like consecration of individuals to the sublime task of saving society. The world requires to be shaken in every generation. It is a mark of humanity's moral default that the race is always in peril of lapsing back into spiritual poverty. Withdraw the offices of religion for a decade, and civilization would reel toward barbarism. This hour, as always, Christ is saying, "Go, work to-day in My vineyard!"

The inadequacy of workers for the work is the painful element in the current situation. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into his harvest." The only calling in the world, in which the supply does not exceed the demand, is that of Christian service. One of the troubles of our times is that religion is a mere department in men's lives. It has a pigeon-hole in the merchant's desk, a box in the capitalist's safety deposit vault, a day in the calendar, a fraction of an income, a modicum of time, a division of talent and energy. It is not the supreme, controlling interest of life. What to eat and drink, and wherewithal to be clothed, the quest of the temporal, absorbs the attention of thousands. Business is more important than worship, politics awakens greater enthusiasm than evangelism, the pleasures of the world are sweeter than the delights of God's house. The majority of Christians are receivers, and not transmitters. They have an im-

mense capacity for sermons and addresses, but little purpose to transmute pious sentiments into practical effort in behalf of the lost. A child who saw a deaf man sitting on the pulpit stairs with a large ear-trumpet against his head, asked, "Is that an archangel?" Too many Christians who ought to be proclaiming the message of salvation are content with merely listening to its charming accents.

The ancient Batavians, Motley tells us, wore a ring of iron about their necks until they had slain an enemy in battle. After this achievement it was broken off, being considered an emblem of sloth. The Christian who has not won a soul for his Lord is burdened with a badge of humiliation, which can not be removed until he has at least made an honest effort to lead a sinner to the Cross.



A young American girl was in Berlin some years ago when the Emperor's birthday was being celebrated. It was her good fortune to be taken through the palace during the absence of the Kaiser, and to be shown the gifts which were on exhibition. What chiefly interested her was the manner in which a poor woman's humble present was received. She came with a few little strawberries, which she had evidently raised in her own garden. These were so small in quantity that her basket had first been nearly filled with eggs, and then the berries had been arranged to the best advantage on the top. The attendant who received them said most courteously, "The Emperor will be very grateful for your gift," and the woman went away in a transport of happiness, for she had brought her best to the beloved sovereign. The English historian Green, describing a period of persecution for religious opinions, says that "the commonest lives gleamed into poetry at the stake." Christian service transfigures the persons of those who render it, for sacrifice is involved in consecration, and sacrifice is divine. The Christian who hesitates to work for the rescue of the perishing because he is conscious

that his talents are meager has never learned that bringing one's best to Christ, however humble it may be, is the measure of one's fidelity and the prophecy of an exceeding great reward. The aggregate of unused talent in the world is very greatly in excess of the whole sum which is applied in a practical way to the help of the world. The aim of the Church is to realize the ideal expressed in the prayer of Moses. "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them!" If the power which is lost to the Church through the diffidence of the humble and the neglect of the talented could be reclaimed, the world would soon be brought to Christ.

Whenever Dr. Johnson looked upon the face of his watch he saw there in Greek characters the impressive words, "The night cometh." Jesus felt the instigation of the fact thus announced. "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." The time is short, the need is great, the laborers are few, the obligation is insistent.



Jesus was inspired by a vision of the world redeemed from sin. It sustained Him in hours of depression, when His enemies misconstrued His motives and His disciples misunderstood His words, when He was hungry and weary and felt the world's contempt. It comforted Him when Judas betrayed Him, when the agony of Gethsemane was upon Him, when the mobs buffeted Him, and when the authorities bartered His blood. It thrilled Him on Calvary, and made His death-throes a mighty rapture. He looked away across the stormy centuries through the clouds of war and the mists of doubt, and saw the world recovered from the fell dominion of iniquity, and He cried like a victor from the field of valor. "It is finished!" The coming of the Samaritans to listen to His words by the well near Sychar gave Him a foregleam of the ultimate triumph of His mission. The acceptance of His self-revelation by the sinful woman with whom He conversed at noonday presaged for Him

the final conquest of the world to truth. Weariness and hunger were forgotten in the joy of a divine achievement. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."

Into the vision of Jesus Christ every disciple may enter who will co-operate in the execution of His mission. To realize that one is sharing the labors of Christ, and shall some day participate in His triumph and experience His glory, is enough to make one shout in the very streets for excess of joy.

At daybreak on the summit of Snowdon some quarrymen asked Newman Hall to preach to them. He replied that God was preaching to them through the wonders of nature around them, and that it was better for them to listen to His voice. He simply offered prayer. Two years later a man who had been present informed him that fifty people were converted as the outcome of that season of worship. Newman Hall replied that he had only offered prayer. "Yes," was the answer, "and as they only spoke Welsh they did not understand a word you said, but the result was a revival in the village church near at hand." Lives that are hid with Christ in God, that are actuated by the spirit of a complete consecration to duty, will find a whitening harvest everywhere, and will experience the ecstasy which is born of success in places where even devout faith has not anticipated it.

## XI.

### HEALING OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON.

#### CHAPTER IV. 43-54.

Saint John expresses the Divine voice with absolute authority of spiritual life and death in the present and in the future.—*Ramsay*.

#### Work in Galilee.

JOHN gives in this incident the final illustration in a series of narratives descriptive of the work of Jesus in the several provinces of Palestine, to wit: In Jerusalem, the capital (Chap. II), in Judæa, outside the capital (Chap. III), in Samaria (Chap. IV), and in Galilee (Chap. IV). This appears to be the plan he had in mind, and not a mere accident. At the same time he has followed another scheme, which illustrates the different kinds of work Jesus performed, viz.: first, the miracle, or "sign;" second, an assertion of Messianic office in the cleansing of the temple; third, two interviews with individuals; fourth, an address to His disciples; fifth, calling out testimony from strangers. The chronological order has been interrupted to the extent of omitting certain matter which the writer did not think necessary for his purpose.

#### I. THE GENERAL SITUATION IN GALILEE (43-45).

After two days of teaching in Samaria Jesus passes on to Galilee. John accompanies his announcement of this fact with a quotation from the lips of Jesus which seems at first to be inappropriate (43). "His own country" would appear to be Galilee, when we remember that Jesus was brought up at Nazareth and that He spent

much of His time at Capernaum. What He assigns as a reason for going into Galilee would, therefore, seem to be a good reason for staying away from Galilee. This presents a difficulty of interpretation, and has led to the following among other theories: (1) The supposition that He went into Galilee because He wanted retirement and rest, and would be undisturbed in a part of the country where He was not highly esteemed. This idea is supported apparently by the statement in the early verses of Chap. IV, where it is declared that on account of the contentions of the Pharisees He resolved to leave Judæa and go into Galilee, where He would not be subjected to such embarrassments. The other evangelists record a similar saying about the prophet without honor in his own country with reference to Nazareth (Matt. xiii, 57; Mark vi, 4; Luke iv, 24). (2) Others have explained that Jesus could not begin His public ministry in Galilee because "a prophet hath no honor," etc. So He began in Judæa, and having made a reputation outside "His own country," He came back to it with a certain vogue. John iv, 45, seems to contain this idea. (3) Still others have said that Christ's own country is Judæa, where He was born, and which was the home of the prophets. Here indeed He met little favor. He had been compelled to withdraw from it. When, however, He came into Galilee He was received with open arms. The truth of the saying, apart from all considerations of its precise interpretation in this connection, is amply justified by common observation. Impressed by what they had witnessed of the works and words of Jesus at the feast in Jerusalem, the Galileans gave Him a very cordial welcome. The hour had apparently arrived for Jesus to accomplish a more positive work.

## II. THE MIRACLE AND ITS RESULTS (46-54).

I. **The Occasion (46, 47).** Back to Cana where the first "sign" had been given. Another work in the domestic circle. This time not a physical embarrassment or a social need, but a matter of life. Some



attribute His return to Cana to the probability that His family had settled there. He found the soil prepared. His coming created a great sensation. The news spread rapidly. "A certain nobleman." The term does not refer to birth. He was an official of Herod Antipas, who, though only a tetrarch, held his father's title of king. Whether this man held a civil or military position is unknown. His child was lying at the point of death. His anxiety impels him to come, not send, twenty miles from Capernaum. Desires eagerly to bring Jesus to the bedside of his child.

2. **The Nobleman's Faith Tested (48).** Jesus appears almost cold and indifferent. He deprecates the disposition of the Galileans to seek "signs and wonders" as a basis for faith. Here, as elsewhere, He insists that such faith is not of the highest quality.
3. **The Nobleman's Paternal Anxiety (49).** "My little child." The man's solicitude is pathetic. Having come twenty miles he will not be put off. Jesus shows no eagerness to secure an official as such for an adherent, but He is touched by the man's earnestness and suffering. He also realizes that while the man is thus engrossed, no higher truth than pertains to his present anxiety can be introduced into his mind. He will therefore attend to his plea, while at the same time moving the man's heart to deeper things.
4. **The Nobleman's Faith Enlarged (50).** Jesus gives more than the man asks. The father believes that Christ can come and heal his son, but it did not occur to him that He could heal the child without coming. Compare the case of the centurion (Matt. viii, 8). The nobleman believed that Christ could heal a sick child, but he did not dream that Christ could raise a dead child. What an enlarged vision of Christ's power broke upon the man's mind at the words of Jesus, "Thy son liveth." Thus a feeble faith is nursed, disciplined, proved, enlarged.



5. **The Sign Confirmed (51-53).** The man returned somewhat leisurely. Did not meet his servants coming to tell him the good news until the next day. Reasons given for this are various, as follows: (1) His faith is so confident that he does not need to hurry. (2) Had some business affairs as an official which required his personal attention. (3) Differences in the computation of time may account for apparent delay. In any case the child had rallied at the exact time Jesus had spoken the words, as they found by comparing notes. The true character of a miracle is shown herein. It was predicted, or announced, and occurred at the time and under the circumstances specified. It was referable to a personal agent.
6. **Impression on the Nobleman (53).** "Himself believed and all his house." He believed now not merely in the word of Jesus, but in His true personal character. "The miracle was a double one: on the body of the absent child, on the heart of the present father; one was cured of his sickness, the other of his unbelief." (*Trench.*)

### The Climax of Faith.

*"Himself believed, and his whole house."*

—JOHN iv, 53.

John had a fine sense for dramatic movement. If he had been inventing a story he would never have missed an opportunity for cumulative effect. When he relates an incident in the life of Christ he arranges his items in a progressive order. He would say that this resulted inevitably from simply recording the Master's method of dealing with individuals. Illustrations of Christ's art of leading a soul on from the beginnings of belief to the confession of a profound faith are found in the interview with the Samaritan woman, the healing of the man who was blind from birth, and the conversation with Martha at the grave of Lazarus. The same skillful method is employed in developing the faith of the nobleman whose child was recovered from illness by the word of Jesus. At the end of the story the father is shown to have attained a summit of faith of which he did not dream at the commencement.

A young Jewish lad named David Mendel, who used to astonish a book-seller in Hamburg by losing himself for hours in volumes so learned that no one else would touch them, was attracted to certain works on Christianity, and read them with growing interest. He was impressed with the claims which Jesus makes upon humanity, and finally became convinced that He who taught such ethics, and required of His adherents such a life, must be more than a man. For a long time he wavered between fidelity to the teachings of his parents and loyalty to the new conceptions which had entered his soul. At length he could hold his false position no longer, and publicly renounced Judaism and was baptized. To commemorate the change which had occurred in his life he adopted the name Neander, signifying *new man*. Such, by a slow but steady process from the first awakening of his mind to the final surrender of his will, was the conversion of the man who has been called the father

of modern Church history. In like manner the rudimentary faith of the nobleman of Capernaum grew into mature strength under the cultivating skill of Jesus.



Trouble was the inciting cause which led the nobleman to seek the help of Christ. He must have had a little faith in the power of the person who had created such an impression by his works, or he would not have come to Cana. But if he had not been in distress he probably would not have approached Jesus. There was at least a willingness to believe, born of his deep anxiety. Adversity drives many a soul to Christ. Sickness in the household, financial embarrassment, the death of loved ones, a dire misfortune, will often send men to their knees who have not been accustomed to pray, provided there is a glimmer of faith in their hearts. Victor Hugo says: "The pupil is dilated at night, and eventually finds daylight in it, in the same way as the soul is dilated in misfortune, and eventually finds God in it." Lincoln declared that he had little interest in personal religion until the loss of a child turned his attention to the consolations secured by communion with God. "I was an upright man in my outward life before he died," said a father, pointing to a portrait of his son which hung on the wall, "but when he left me I became a Christian." In the hour of utter defeat many a man who has neglected God flees to Him for succor. What a strange inconsistency! What right has he to pray in adversity who has been mute in prosperity? The blessed right of one in trouble to appeal to Him who said, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." By responding to that invitation when life is most unpromising, many persons of little faith ultimately find God.



Daniel Webster during his last illness called for the reading of the ninth chapter of Mark, in which occurs the story of the father who brought his demoniac child

to Jesus, and said, "If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us." When Jesus had assured the man that all things were possible to him who believes, the agonized father cried out in tears, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." After this passage had been read, Mr. Webster asked for the tenth chapter of John, which concludes with the words, "And many believed on Him there." Then he dictated the following inscription for his monument, and after revising it affixed his signature: "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief. Philosophical argument, especially that drawn from the vastness of the universe, in comparison with the apparent insignificance of this globe, has sometimes shaken my reason for the faith that is in me; but my heart has assured and reassured me that the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be a reality."

On a certain occasion when Jesus had been giving His disciples some teaching which was particularly difficult for them to receive, they exclaimed, "Lord, increase our faith!" Such a prayer is sure to be answered, and doubtless Mr. Webster found it so, for he passed away in the full confidence that Christ had redeemed him, saying fervently: "Now, unto God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be praise forever and forever! Amen." The nobleman in our story probably was not spiritually intelligent enough to offer a petition for increased faith, but his heart did inspire him with an intense yearning for the assistance which he believed he could obtain of Christ, who never misses an opportunity to draw faith on to a deeper expression. In this instance Jesus seeks to provoke belief of a higher quality by a policy of hesitation. He chides the man for wanting wonders wrought to induce faith, but when the father ignores the criticism and in a passion of grief cries out, "Sir, come down ere my child die!" Jesus grants his request, though not exactly in the way he had asked. For, instead of going with him to Capernaum, Jesus surpasses what the man had supposed possible, and pronounces the child healed at that moment, saying, "Go thy way; thy son liveth."

Thus Christ nourishes a feeble faith into strength.

His very hesitation is but to test the sincerity of the suppliant, to draw his desire for help out to an intense longing, to impel him to cast himself utterly upon the Lord, and thus finally to enable him to apprehend the meaning of belief unto eternal life. Many acceptable prayers doubtless remain unanswered for a season, not because the Lord does not hear, nor because He is not willing, but because He would discipline the soul, and tutor it into a nobler trust.



The nobleman's faith now assumes such proportions that he trusts the word of Jesus completely. He betrays not the least incredulity. With no indication of anxiety, he makes his journey homeward, to find on conference with his servants, who meet him on the way, that his child began to amend at the precise time when Jesus said, "Thy son liveth." Here is confirmatory evidence that Jesus actually wrought the miracle He announced, and which the nobleman believed was performed before he possessed the proof. That is genuine faith, and it has the quality which believers must now show, if they are to receive the benefits of fellowship with Christ. Mr. Huxley admitted that "It is not upon any *a priori* considerations that objections either to the supposed efficacy of prayer or to the supposed occurrences of miracles can be based." He thought, as do other doubters of the miraculous, that the evidence for such supernatural events is not adequate. But the argument that an occurrence is altogether improbable if it contradicts the general experience of mankind is not to be relied upon with perfect confidence. Said Lyman Abbott: "If the Old Testament told the story of a naval engagement between the Jewish people and a pagan people, in which all the ships of the pagan people were destroyed, and yet not a single man was killed among the Jews, all the skeptics would have scorned the narrative. Every one *now* believes it, except those who live in Spain."

Is Christ divine? Then He can do anything which is right, and is sufficiently wise to know when the object

sought is important enough to justify the miraculous exercise of power. The healing of this child without the interposition of Christ's bodily touch, or even His personal attendance at the sick bed, is no more incredible to those who believe in Christ's true character than the wonders of wireless telegraphy would be to those who have never learned its secrets or witnessed its remarkable performances; while the marvels of thought-transference and other psychic phenomena, which modern investigators of occult science have brought to light, indicate how foolish and unreasonable is the usual protest against the miracles of Jesus. In any case the Christian believes his Lord is superior to any difficulties which confront ordinary persons, for He is the Son of God.

Into fellowship with Him let the children and youth of our households be brought at the earliest opportunity. Parental anxiety for the health, the education, and the worldly success of the young is ordinarily strong enough. But eagerness for their spiritual well-being is frequently lacking. Even those who are entrusted with the religious instruction of children are sometimes unmindful of their highest obligations. Parents and ministers and teachers in the Sunday-school do not always realize the solemnity of their positions.

When the Greeley Relief Expedition had reached the frozen regions of the North, and the few survivors of the Arctic perils were being removed, the boats in which they were to be conveyed to the ship were nearly swamped by the carelessness of a sailor. The officer in command cried out: "Steady! Steady! It were better for us not to have found these sufferers, if we are now to be so careless as to lose them." It would have been better that we had never been given the privilege of addressing ourselves to the care of the young, if we are now to miss the opportunity of bringing them within the saving grace of Jesus Christ.



The climax of the nobleman's faith was attained when he attached himself to Jesus Christ in personal fellowship. As a consequence of the steady development of



his confidence in the Master, "himself believed, and his whole house." That would be a strange expression to use at this point, if it did not mean more than had already been said. The man believed to a certain degree when he first came to Jesus. He believed with a fuller confidence when Jesus said, "Thy son liveth." He believed with a still deeper trust when his servants confirmed his expectations. But when he saw with his own eyes the indisputable evidence of his child's recovery he believed in the real mission of Jesus, and hailed Him as the Messiah. Henceforth he would be a loyal disciple, for he was a changed man.

No miracle would be of any permanent value to us if it did not thus bring us into loving attachment to Christ as Lord and Savior. Faith-cures which have no spiritual effects must be forever under suspicion. That miracle is most impressive which most obviously transforms the character of him in whose behalf it is performed.

A tall and powerful Scotchman working in a steel mill was, like many of his fellows, addicted to the excessive use of strong drink. But one day it was announced that he had turned "religious." And when he was pressed to drink he said, "I shall never take a drink mair, lads. Na drunkard can inhabit the kingdom of God." A knowing one smiled incredulously, and said, "Wait a bit, wait a bit. Wait until the hot weather of July. When he gets as dry as a gravel pit, then he will give in. He can't help it." But straight through the hottest months he toiled on without a single failure. Finally the superintendent said to him one day: "You used to take considerable liquor. Don't you miss it?" "Yes," said he emphatically. "How do you manage to keep away from it?" he was asked. "Weel, just this way," he replied. "It is now ten o'clock, is n't it? Weel, to-day is the twentieth of the month. From seven till eight I asked the Lord to halp me. He did so, and I put a dot down on the calendar right near the twenty. From eight till nine He kep' me, and I put down anither dot. From nine to ten He's kep' me, and noo I gie Him the glory



as I put down the third dot. Just as I mark these I pray, 'O Lord, halp me; halp me to fight it off for anither hour.' " If a man has never experienced a transforming power akin to this, even though it be not in such a desperate situation, then he does not realize the kind of miracles Jesus is capable of performing, nor has he demonstrated for himself the supreme efficacy of faith in the Son of God.

### SECTION III.

### PERIOD OF CONFLICT.

#### CHAPTERS V-XI.

IN this section of John's Gospel we have five miracles or "signs" and a variety of very important discourses, suggested mainly by the hostility of the Jewish rulers toward Christ, which from this point begins to show itself openly, and which culminates after the raising of Lazarus in an avowed determination to destroy the Master. The divisions in John's work need to be kept in mind if the purpose of the writer is to be fully understood. This is made the more necessary by the differences which exist between his Gospel and the narratives of the other evangelists. Section III falls into the following divisions:

1. THE HEALING AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA.
2. DISCOURSE ON LIFE: A DEFENSE.
3. SIGNS AT THE SEA OF GALILEE.
4. DISCOURSE ON THE BREAD OF LIFE.
5. JESUS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.
6. JESUS AND THE FALLEN WOMAN.
7. THE WITNESS OF JESUS CONCERNING HIMSELF.
8. THE HEALING OF THE MAN BORN BLIND.
9. THE ALLEGORY OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.
10. DISCOURSE AT THE FEAST OF DEDICATION.
11. THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.



## XII.

# HEALING OF THE IMPOTENT MAN AT BETHESDA.

## CHAPTER V. 1-16.

The Fourth Gospel is the heart of Christ.—*Ernesti*.

### Introduction (1-4).

Uncertain what feast is meant. Opinions divided between Pentecost, Purim, Passover, Tabernacles. Most modern scholars think Purim. Study characteristics of this feast.

Impossible to identify the pool of Bethesda with certainty. Several plausible conjectures have been made. Intermittent springs now found in the locality show how favorable the soil is to such a phenomenon. Bethesda may mean "House of Mercy," or "House of Outpouring," or "House of the Portico." The pool was surrounded by colonnades, porticoes, or cloisters, in which the sick could be sheltered. The place was a kind of infirmary to which Jesus came perhaps to heal this very patient.

The reputation of the place was established, for a multitude of expectant sick folk were waiting for the boiling of the waters, which were probably mineral, and most efficacious when in motion. The reference to the coming of the angel to disturb the pool is simply a phrasing of the popular belief, and is regarded as an interpolation by the best scholars. Observe that supernatural qualities are ascribed to phenomena which are not understood. Science clears away such superstitions, but science does not account for the miracles of Jesus. There was no instantaneous cure worked by this thermal spring.

The patients who sought it probably had no such expectation. They believed that by repeated baths they would finally be healed.

### I. THE SIGN (5-9).

1. **The Man's Hapless State.** Has been thirty-eight years suffering his malady. Figures given to show how desperate is his case. Some think this an illustration of the period of thirty-eight years which Israel endured as a punishment wandering in the wilderness. The man a type of the Jewish people paralyzed by faithlessness at the time of Christ's coming. Jesus with His deep discernment quickly discovers the worst case in the crowd. Perhaps He knows his situation from popular account, perhaps by supernatural intelligence. The miracles reported by John are all wrought spontaneously, as though they were impelled by Christ's profound sympathy with humanity, except the healing of the nobleman's son in Chap. IV.
2. **The Great Physician's Challenge.** "Do you wish to get well? have you a will to that end?" The interrogation is justified. There are invalids who do not care to be healed. They trade on their sickness as professional mendicants, or they take satisfaction in the attentions of their friends. This man's healing depended in large part upon his will to have it. In the physical realm the will plays a very considerable part, as all medical men will testify. In the spiritual realm it is the determining factor, and is called faith. If either a sick man or a sinner acquiesces in his condition there is no hope for him.
3. **The Helpless Helped (7-9).** Having no man to cast him into the pool, and being incapable of entering himself, the impotent man is shown that he does not require the pool, or any other external remedy. The Master cries, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." Three things are thus shown to be necessary: 1. Instant obedience to the call, which will be followed by

strength. 2. Immediate trust, which will enable him to abandon all other means of healing. 3. Readiness to use the strength obtained forthwith. The result is an instantaneous cure.

## II. THE RESULT OF THE SIGN (10-16).

1. **Hostility of the Jews.** Attack upon the man, which is a veiled assault upon Jesus. They care nothing for the cure. They are only zealous for the suppression of the healer. The Sabbath law is broken in the letter. It is nothing to them that it is kept in the spirit, which they do not understand. Jesus was culpable if judged only by the Rabbinical glosses on the fourth commandment. He was innocent if judged by the law of love. By a rigid and showy keeping of the Sabbatic regulations the Pharisees made a display of outer righteousness. By humane deeds on the Sabbath Jesus gave the law a new and beautiful interpretation, which they could not appreciate.
2. **The Man's Defense (11-13).** To his mind the great person who had power to heal him with a word, had also authority to bid him carry away his bed on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees are eager to see the man who has arrogated to himself such unusual prerogatives. But the healed patient does not know his benefactor, who has quietly slipped away in the crowd.
3. **The Healer Discovered (14, 15).** Jesus supplements the physical healing with spiritual teaching. In the temple, whither the man has gone perhaps, to return thanks, the Master finds him, and bids him sin no more, lest a worse affliction come upon him. In some way the man's suffering has been connected with his sins. Not necessary to think this is always true in specific cases. The personal identity of Jesus is in some way disclosed, and the man goes away to proclaim His name. In this there is no evil intention, but a desire to vindicate both himself and the healer.



who is the already famous teacher and miracle worker from Galilee, whose works and words surely justify His irregularities.

4. **The Increased Enmity (16).** They now move for the first time to destroy Him. They attempt to convict Him of Sabbath-breaking, as He has already convicted them of profaning the temple.

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### The Cure of Souls.

*"Wilt thou be made whole?"*—JOHN v, 6.

Among the legends of the Talmud a story is told that when fallen man was driven out of the garden of Eden to till the ground he asked the angel who kept the gate, "What shall I bring back to God when I return?" The angel replied, "Bring Him back the face He gave you in the garden, and I will let you in." He never returned. Yet, by the grace of God, through the redemption which is in Christ, men may get back to paradise, not bearing the face of innocence, but a countenance of conscious favor with God, through the pardon of their sins and the purification of their lives. The healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda is a parable of the spiritual restoration which awaits any man who will answer in the affirmative Christ's question, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

This narrative is no sooner read than some hard-brained man who thinks more of mathematics than dogmatics, who would rather be logical than theological, declares that it is a story more worthy of the Middle Ages than of our times, and wants to know how the Bible can expect to hold the allegiance of intelligent people while it adheres to such preposterous tales, which remind one of the Church of St. Anne de Beaupré or the statues of bleeding saints, or the grotto of Lourdes. He does not know that textual criticism removes certain portions of the narrative which are offensive to reason. Our Revised Version recognizes the fact that a popular misconception of the day about angelic interference in the waters of a thermal spring has been transferred from

the margin of an old manuscript into the body of the text, and has wisely omitted it. And this may be done without impairing the value of the story. On the other hand, it receives added strength.

Those who throw over an entire narrative because some of its details do not appeal to their reason are as unwise as an old Dutch farmer, whose buildings were overrun with rats, and who resorted to the expedient of burning down the structures in order that he might deliver himself from the pests. There are persons to-day calling themselves logical who, because occasionally they discover a minor defect in the Scriptures, repudiate the whole system of Christianity. But after criticism has done its best there remains the fact that Jesus did heal the impotent man. We can not strike out the supernatural from the New Testament. It is here and everywhere. And while the skeptical may question the miraculous element in this healing, on the supposition that the man was possessed of such a disease as only needed for its removal an authoritative voice to make the victim's will assert itself, no such explanation will account for many other recorded miracles. And we have no occasion to make apology for Jesus. He is life, and life essentially. And what we call the miraculous is simply the extraordinary emergence of life, the unusual working of an activity that is constantly in exercise. Huxley admitted that there was no inherent reason to deny the credibility of a miracle; and we who have seen Jesus working spiritual miracles in this twentieth century have no reason to discredit the story of His physical miracles in the first century. But Jesus was always chary of performing miracles. He had no disposition to work them merely that men might be amazed. The wonder is that He performed so few; that He should have been so self-controlled as not to be forever doing wonders. His miracles were for "signs;" they were to signify something. They are as different from the miracles of the Middle Ages as can be conceived. There is no moral significance in a story of healing by the bones of saints. But in the miracles which Jesus works there is an essential moral

significance, a spiritual lesson, a type of eternal life which the student can not possibly overlook. John seems to have fallen into the habit of his Master's mind, and thought always of His miracles in relation to divine truth. Did Jesus by wondrous multiplication of fishes and loaves feed five thousand men? Then it was a mark of the fact that He was Himself the Bread of Life. Was He able to open the eyes of the blind man? Then it was a sublime illustration of the fact that Jesus is the Light of the World. Could He cure an impotent man at the pool of Bethesda? Then it was a type of the fact that He could restore those who were spiritually impotent. Did He raise Lazarus from the dead? Then it was to prove that He was the Resurrection and the Life.



"Wilt thou be made whole?" It is a very important question. Not every one who whines about his sickness is anxious to be well. There are people who really "enjoy poor health." The professional mendicant likes to tear open his wound and expose it to your sympathetic gaze. He will tell you pathetically the number of hospitals he has entered, what he has suffered at the hands of many physicians. There may be hypocrisies in the sick room. A chronic illness which is not attended by great suffering is often regarded as a luxury not to be given up without a protest. The flowers and fruits which kindly-disposed people bring to the afflicted, the gentle attentions which the merciful and gracious love to pay to the unfortunate—these are exceedingly agreeable. To be the object of a compassionate interest, such as is not bestowed on the well, constitutes a very seductive temptation to remain ill as long as possible. Do you wish to get physical soundness? is a very significant question. Are you willing to accept the responsibilities of being in health? A sick man has the right to be idle. Do you wish to be well and to cease from idleness? An invalid is entitled to delicate attentions. Do you desire to be recovered from your malady, so that you can quit being

a beneficiary and begin to be a benefactor? Such a question strikes at the very center of character.

"Wilt thou be made whole?" is the challenge of Jesus to those who are suffering from spiritual impotency. Do you want to assume the obligations which sound health imposes? It is natural for the morally invalid to be the object of various ministrations. Do you want to be well enough to minister to others who are in need?

Not every one who is sick and talks so interestingly of his disease is really anxious to be relieved of his spiritual sickness. The melancholy of his situation is impressive. He is the object of much solicitude on the part of godly people. His evil habits have victimized him, and he likes his picturesque misery. Lord Byron was guilty of such a foolish self-pity. He showed a mawkish sentimentality about the sins which he never ceased to love. He was pleased to think of himself as the unfortunate prey of fleshly lusts, while he gloried in his shame. Sometimes moral obliquity sinks so low that the sinner plumes himself on his insensibility. A man recently said that he would rather pay ten thousand dollars to retain his delicious thirst for alcoholic beverages, to which he was a slave, than to pay one hundred dollars for its removal. When a soul has dropped into that abyss of spiritual morbidity, he can scarcely hear the voice of God summoning him to liberty and life. Fénelon imagined a dialogue between Ulysses and Grillus, the man whom Circe had turned into a hog. Ulysses wished to bring him back to manhood. But Grillus would not consent. He said, "No, the life of a hog is so much pleasanter." "But," said Ulysses, "Do you make no account of eloquence, poetry, and music?" "No, I would rather grunt than be eloquent like you." "But," asked Ulysses further, "How can you endure this nastiness and stench?" Grillus replied, "It all depends on the taste; the odor is sweeter to me than that of amber, and the filth than the nectar of the gods."

It is a pertinent question for every spiritually impotent person—Do you sincerely wish to get well, or do you prefer to languish amid the porticoes of Bethesda?

"Wilt thou be made whole?" Have you a *will* to be sound in health? The impotent man in the story replies to Jesus: "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me." But, have you a will to be well? If the patient has no purpose to secure health, the conscientious doctor may as well throw physic to the dogs. If the sufferer refuses to launch his will into co-operation with the medical practitioner's effort, there is no hope of recovery. What a wondrous therapeutic agency is the will! Wyclif is dying, and the monks enter his chamber to announce the Pope's bull of excommunication. They hold out the promise of restoration to the favor of the Church if he will recant his heretical teachings. Then the mighty reformer raises himself upon his elbow, looks his tormentors in the face, and declares that he will not die, but will live to confute his enemies. And live he does for four long years to push his sublime work for religious freedom. History is brimful of such illustrations, and current life is producing them every day. It is a matter of great moment that a man shall will to throw off the tyranny of disease.

Do you will to be saved from sin? is the question Jesus is asking. The man at Bethesda heard the challenge of the Master, responded to it, and in the expenditure of his will, by an exercise of what we call faith, took up his mat and walked. By Divine energy the latent will of the man was aroused. To Christ's "Rise up and walk" the man gave instant acquiescence, and received immediate healing. "Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee." Here again the will is made responsible. "I have a frightful temper," says the impotent sinner; "it sweeps me off my feet." That is, you are temporarily insane. You comfort yourself with the thought that you are irresponsible. Did you ever set your will against it? You have a darling sin; it subverts you, it shames you, but you say you can not help it. Have you set your will against it? Do you want to be made whole? No, you expect



some friend to put you into the pool, and you fancy the magic of its effervescent waters will effect a cure. You look in the wrong direction. Christ is appealing to you, "Rise up and walk!" You hope that some tide of religious emotion will seize you in a fortunate hour and bear you far on toward righteousness and purity. You do not consider that some reflux wave of human passion may sweep you back into moral impotence and misery. It is the constant willing to do the will of God which brings a salvation which endures to the end.



"Wilt thou be made whole?" Your will and His will must coalesce, for the power of the healing is in Christ. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Pay heed to Him, and health is yours. It is your will yielding subordination to His will which effects the cure. The sympathy and tenderness of Jesus are unparalleled. He resorts to the natural hospital at Bethesda, where He can find a multitude of sick folk, and casts His eye about to discover the worst case there. He journeys up and down the world with the same blessed purpose. The most deplorable sufferers are not those which seem to human eyes the utterly degraded, who wanton in the slums and purlieus of the city, for often these know they are in hell and are eager to escape from torment. The most pitiable cases are the impotent, the self-pitying, the self-righteous, with whom it is difficult for us to have sympathy, but for whom Christ has deep compassion. How wonderful is His tenderness! What surpassing devotion is His! He loves even the fool in his folly. And if it were possible He would save such without their consent. You sometimes fancy it would be better if Jesus would come to the world and take humanity on His shoulders, as Æneas did the old Anchises, and bear them one by one out of sickness into health, out of sin into salvation. And He would do this if it were possible, though it required myriads of years. But by the constitution of the

race this in unthinkable. Religion is not a process by which people are transported to a place, but by which they are transformed in character, and no man becomes godly until he wants to be saved with a wistful eagerness that counts no effort too great. "Wilt thou be made whole? Rise up and walk." The Master calls, but He calls in vain, until the impotent put forth their latent energy to hear His voice and respond to His summons.



### XIII.

## DISCOURSE ON LIFE—A DEFENSE.

### CHAPTER V. 17-47.

In the four Gospels, or rather in the four books of the one Gospel, the apostle St. John has lifted higher and far more sublimely than the other three his proclamation, and in lifting it up he has wished our hearts also to be lifted up.—*Augustine.*

THIS is the first of those public discourses recorded by John in which Jesus defends Himself against His accusers. Others of like purpose occur in later chapters of this gospel. This one marks the real beginning of that conflict with the authorities which only ended with the murder of Jesus. It is of vast significance. "This five minutes' talk with the Jews contains probably the most important truth ever uttered upon earth." (*Dods.*) The discourse falls into three parts, as follows: 1. Jesus justifies Himself on the basis of His filial relation to God the Father. 2. He affirms that this relation is attested by the witness of the Father. 3. He exposes the reason which leads the Jews to reject Him.

#### I. JESUS JUSTIFIED BY HIS RELATION TO THE FATHER (17-30).

1. **His Line of Defense Indicated (17, 18).** Jesus does not answer the charge of Sabbath-breaking in any direct way, though He might have done so, since works of mercy were allowable. He lays down His position at once in the words, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." His justification is in His unity with the Father, who is superior to His own laws. God's rest after creation, on which the Sab-

bath law is erected, was not one of inactivity, but of beneficent work, "and man's true rest is not a rest *from* human earthly labor, but a rest *for* divine heavenly labor." (*Westcott*.) No Sabbath law has interfered with God's activity, and none must prevent the Son's labors of love. The Jews were perfectly right in supposing that Christ made Himself equal with God, and hence they shift the accusation from Sabbath-breaking to blasphemy, and seek His destruction more violently.

2. **His Filial Relationship Emphasized (19, 20).** A marked characteristic of Christ's various defenses is herein illustrated. It is His habit to insist on the very claims which provoke assault with even greater emphasis than accompanies their original statement. The charge of blasphemy involves antagonism between Him and God. But He is the Son of God; therefore no hostility can exist. He does what He sees the Father do. He is constrained by the Father's love. Greater works will result from this filial relationship, and they will cause still greater astonishment.
3. **His Filial Relationship Proven (21-30).** In two wonderful ways His essential oneness with the Father is shown: I. By Christ's power to impart spiritual life. The healing of the impotent man is a type of His power to quicken the spiritually impotent into life. This is one of the "greater works" which He has promised will cause them to marvel. His power to do this is based on His unity with the Father. The Father has committed this prerogative to Him, that all men may honor Him. To refuse Him is to refuse the Father; to receive Him is to obtain eternal life. Many will hereafter have this experience; some have already attained it (v. 25). The Son has this power in His own person, and also the authority to pronounce judgment (v. 26), "because He is the Son of man," that is, having become man, He is endowed with the two-fold function of possessing life in Himself, and of executing judg-

ment (v. 27. Compare Phil. ii, 6-10). 2. By His power to raise the physically dead to life (28-30). There will be a final resurrection and a final judgment, not dependent upon the co-operation of the human will, as was the case with the healing of the impotent man, but as the result of the Son's command. But His will is the will of the Father, without whom He does nothing (v. 30). Thus the defense comes round to the starting point, Christ's eternal fellowship with the Father.

## II. THE DIVINE WITNESS TO THIS RELATIONSHIP (31-40).

1. **The Necessity for This Witness (31, 32).** Jesus admits that His own personal witness unsupported would apparently be open to suspicion. Moreover, if His witness did not agree with that of the Father it could properly be discredited. But He knows the witness of the Father to be in exact correspondence with His own inner consciousness of filial relationship with God (v. 32).
2. **Other Witnesses Suggested (33-35).** The witness of John the Baptist is a type, and it is true. Jesus does not depend upon this, or any other human witness, but He mentions it because it is probably in their minds. While He does not rest upon it for the vindication of His claims, yet He knows that they reposed much confidence in the Baptist, and He will use any plea which may be effective with them, in order that some of them may be saved if possible. John was a temporary light of great value, and they rejoiced in him for a time, and he pointed to Christ.
3. **The Supreme Witness—the Father (36-40).** The Father's witness is made apparent in several ways. (1) The works which the Father has sent Him to do are a visible witness of God's favor. (2) The manifestation of God to their consciences, as Christ spoke to them, was a sufficient witness if their hearts

had not been false. (3) The Scriptures, which testify of Christ, are a plain witness for those who search them aright. Despite these several expressions of God, in which He clearly bears witness to Christ, they will not come unto Him for life.

### III. THE WITNESS REJECTED THROUGH UNBELIEF (41-47).

Unbelief is a moral state, not a mere intellectual attitude. The Jews reject Christ, not because they can not believe in Him on the strength of the testimony given, but because they do not want to believe in Him. He does not need their favor. Honor from men is nothing to Him, and He refuses it, but He knows that the love of God is not in their hearts, and that this accounts for their rejection of Him. They are thoroughly worldly in their ambitions. If He had suited Himself to their carnal mood they would have accepted Him with enthusiasm, but in their temper they will not receive the Son who comes in the name of the Father. They are self-condemned. Moreover, they can offer no defense on the ground of rigid orthodoxy, for even Moses, on whom they profess to rely, is totally against them.

## Life and Life Again.

*"As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself."*—JOHN V, 26.

Corot made a study of a little peasant girl one year near Arras. On his return some months later he learned that the child had been drowned. Carrying his sketch to the father he said, "Here's your daughter come back!" The peasant would never permit that portrait of his child to be loaned to an exhibition, or to be seen by any one but himself, and directed in his will that it be laid on his heart, to sleep with him in the tomb. Even the pictorial shadow of life is precious to those who have been bereft of their beloved. But Jesus has promised the life again in defiance of the utmost Death can do.

Life can only be imparted by Him who "hath life in Himself." Jesus came in the form of man, but He differs from all other men in this respect, that while other men receive life, He is life. His most intimate friend on earth said that "in Him was life, and the life was the light of men." He said of Himself, "I am the way, the truth and the life." When He met Death during His pilgrimage through the world, as was frequently His fortune, He did not shrink back from his presence, as we do. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life," and Death withdrew to his dark domain. Jesus made a daring claim, and it was bound to provoke hostile criticism. But the lucidity of His mind and the perfection of His character compel us to believe that He was very sane and very sincere when He said, "I am life." Moreover, He has demonstrated His authority in all the ranges of what we call life. We have never seen Him cure the sick, or minister to a mind diseased, or raise the dead; but we have beheld Him rousing men sunken in sin to the consciousness of fellowship with God. And having witnessed this miracle in character, we are convinced that He can perform any lesser marvel which the exigencies of human life may require. We believe that He could go through all the hospitals of the world and turn all the

sick and impotent folk out with abounding health, and that He could march through all the asylums of the world and make lunacy a forgotten malady—for He is life. This power He showed in healing the man at the pool of Bethesda, who had been under the spell of an infirmity for thirty-eight years. And this is an illustration of Christ's ability to impart life apart from any human agency, except the response of the human will, in the exercise of faith in Him.



What irony there is in the attempt of the Jews to slay Him who is life! The sleuths were on the track of Jesus. They could not dispute the cure He had effected. The evidence of it was in that man walking off with his mattress. But the work had been wrought on the Sabbath-day—O, monstrous iniquity! One can fancy these persecutors to be quite hilarious in spirit, though they conceal their joy under a decent solemnity of manner, for they have now discovered an opportunity for gratifying their grudge against this disturber of their peace. They think more of the Sabbath than they do of human life. Thanks to the murderous designs of these pious inquisitors, we have in the heroic defense which Jesus now delivers a thorough exposition of the ground on which He exerts His authority to impart life.

It would have been an easy thing for Jesus to dispose of the accusation that He had violated the Sabbath law by recourse to the Mosaic code. On other occasions when similar charges were lodged against Him He took this course. But in the present instance He does not defend Himself in this fashion. He ignores all such considerations, and with a simple thrust strikes at the core of the whole matter when He says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The activity which characterizes God is not limited by any narrow Sabbath laws which have been passed for the benefit of mankind. From the hour when His creative work was concluded, and He pronounced it good, until this moment He has not ceased to pour Himself out in the sustaining of His uni-

verse, in the impartation of life to His creatures, in the work of redemption for those who are lost. "My Father and I are one. He worketh until now, and I work. His will is Mine; His work is My work. At any moment I am ready at His command to do whatsoever He desireth."

Instantly the charge of an infraction of the Sabbath law is dropped. His accusers pass over the whole matter, and charge Him with identifying Himself with God, and therefore with being guilty of blasphemy. Their instinct was correct, their motive contemptible. It is the assumption on the part of Jesus that He is God, and that life proceeds from Him inevitably, that creates the sore place in the proud heart of the unbeliever. But if that assumption is not justified it will be difficult to find any truth in the New Testament that one need proclaim with urgency.

Passing now from this general statement of the basis on which He has assumed authority to impart life to men, Jesus bursts forth, first, into a general statement of His divine right to raise the dead and judge them, and then to a more particular statement, in a concrete and explicit form, of His rights in the moral and external domains now and forever with relation to the destiny of mankind. He virtually says to these accusers, "You profess to be scandalized because I am supposed to have violated the Sabbath laws, and because I have claimed to be divine in My own person; what will you say when I tell you that all power is Mine? that I am the judge of the quick and the dead, and that by My own voice I shall call men from the tomb, and in the end shall be the final and absolute arbiter of the destinies of human beings? For, as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will."



When the good grandmother of Millet found that the artist had gone to the limit of propriety in certain of his paintings, she wrote to him not in severe censure, but with gentle wisdom, "Follow the example of that man



of your own profession who used to say, 'I paint for eternity!' For no cause whatever permit yourself to do evil works, or to lose sight of the presence of God. With St. Jerome think incessantly that you hear the trumpet that shall summon us to judgment."

This godly admonition harmonizes with the facts of life. For Jesus has made it plain that judgment is constantly confronting us. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."

These words evidently refer to the offer of spiritual life. And men are judged by their manner of receiving the proposal of Jesus to impart life to them. The impotent man at the pool of Bethesda was judged in this fashion. Had he refused the command of Jesus to rise up and walk, he would have continued in helplessness, and his condemnation would have been written in his persistent infirmity. Having responded to the call of Jesus, he rose to renewed life and escaped condemnation. In this way he was self-judged. And this is the solemn fact with regard to all men. Said John LaFarge, "We do not judge a work of art; it judges us." In the presence of Jesus Christ, men are compelled to pass judgment upon themselves. Their attitude toward Him and His offer of eternal life determines their characters; and the judgment of the hereafter will base itself upon the position they occupied relative to Him in this probationary sphere.



On a plain tablet inserted in the wall of St. Giles, Cripplegate, London, the traveler may read these words, which compose the concluding line in the epitaph of the

Rev. John Foxe, "*Vita vitæ mortalis est spes vitæ immortalis*"—"The hope of immortal life is the life of mortal life." Surely this odd Latin inscription carries a glorious truth. Human life loses its cheer when the hope of immortality vanishes.

Twenty years before his death Kingsley was speaking of that great change to which all flesh is appointed, and said, "God forgive me if I am wrong, but I look forward to it with an intense and reverent curiosity." That was the sentiment of a man interested in all that science could teach him concerning life, and eager for all that religion could reveal to him regarding the future.

But where shall we find the stable foundation for our belief in immortality—that hope of our mortal life? How can we be assured that our "reverent curiosity" about the things after death shall ever be satisfied? Jesus gives reply, as He addresses Himself to the great question of the resurrection. He does not say that He is now calling the dead from the tomb, but that "the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." This is the supreme, the only satisfactory and complete argument in favor of a future life. Naturally immortality is regarded by many persons an unprovable hypothesis; it may belong to us as our birth-right, but the Bible does not say so in unmistakable terms. And the argument from analogy falls to pieces in the presence of the severest scientific investigation of our day. No man who stands by the bedside of a dying friend and observes the process of dissolution can see anything in the physical phenomena of man's death that differentiates it from the death of an animal. Without the resurrection of the New Testament in the person of Jesus Christ, there is no absolute foundation upon which one can rest a hope of the future life. Plato may "reason well;" so well that some of his disciples are persuaded to commit suicide in order to reach a life of bliss; but there is no argument from the day of Plato to our own that can support the soul that

questions the fact of a future life. The only sure foundation of such a hope is the personal guarantee of Him who is "Life," who shall some day send His voice thrilling through the world and call the just and unjust out of the tomb to receive judgment.

But this promise cuts in opposite directions. It says that the unjust, as well as the just, shall come at Christ's command. There is no escaping His summons. "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,' even the night shall be light about me. Yea the darkness hideth not from Thee, but the night shineth as the day." There is no escape from Him except escape in Him. Martin Luther said, "If I saw Jesus Christ standing before me with a drawn sword, I would still fling myself into His arms." "Ye will not come unto Me that you might have life," is the sad plaint of the Master of Life and Conqueror of Death. Jesus is the life, the resurrection, the only hope of eternal life, the judge of the quick and the dead, the apportioner of the rewards of the men who have been hearers of His voice and have known His love, the distributor of recompense to those who in deep, moral insensibility have refused to hear His voice and have chosen death instead of life.

The destiny of the human race centers in Jesus Christ. But it could not rest in gentler hands than those which were pierced for man's redemption.

## XIV.

### SIGNS AT THE SEA OF GALILEE.

#### CHAPTER VI. 1-21.

Above all do I like to read the Gospel of John.

—*Claudius*.

ONCE again we observe how John's artistic instinct guides him to place over against one another two incidents in the life of Jesus which are alike and yet unlike. We have here a miracle on the land and a miracle on the water. In the former Christ is portrayed as the support of life; in the latter as the guide of men. In one He is described as enabling His disciples to meet an emergency with the multitude which has been occasioned by His presence; in the other as assisting them in a difficulty which has arisen during His absence. In the first case He helps them to help others; in the second to help themselves.

#### I. THE FIRST SIGN—FEEDING THE MULTITUDE (1-15).

This incident, coming close upon the one narrated in the preceding chapter, illustrates the fact that John makes no attempt to preserve a precise chronological order. There are many such gaps in his record. He is not writing a biography, but presenting a series of characteristic scenes in the life of Jesus which he deems suitable for his purpose, as declared in xx, 31. Frequently he selects material not employed by any of the other evangelists, but here, and elsewhere occasionally, he uses in his own way and for his own ends what others have recorded. This is the only instance of a miracle narrated by all four of the evangelists. Compare, for details omitted here, Matt. xiv, 13-21; Mark vi, 30-44;

Luke ix, 10-17. This is indeed the only incident of any kind in the life of Jesus before His final visit to Jerusalem, which is set down by all of the gospel writers. As Jesus had shown to the Samaritans and to the people of Jerusalem, so now to the Galileans He would demonstrate that He was the giver of eternal life. The story of the Feeding is the text for the discourse on the bread of life, which is given in the same chapter.

1. **The Occasion of the Miracle (1-4).** Jesus has withdrawn to the eastern shore of Tiberias, by which name the Sea of Galilee was known to classical writers, a designation used by John alone in the New Testament, in order that He might secure rest. He had arrived at a place called Bethsaida Julias (Luke ix, 10). The feast of the Passover was near, a fact which both gave point to the miracle and also accounted for the increased multitude which pressed upon Him. Hosts of people were on their way to Jerusalem, many of whom joined themselves to the crowd which had followed Jesus around the head of the lake, eager to witness further miracles. Jesus had retired to a mountain with His disciples, but His retreat was incapable of concealing Him. Instead of resenting the intrusion of the mob, His sympathies were awakened for the weary and hungry host.

2. **The Embarrassment of the Disciples (5-9).** The narrative is plainly that of an eye-witness. Philip is tested by the question, "Whence shall we buy bread?" This betrays no anxiety on the part of Jesus, John explains in a parenthesis, but is a good question to stir up a practical man like Philip, and show him his dependence upon a higher power. Philip's perplexity. The money required for such an expenditure is too great a demand for him. Andrew's suggestion. The lad with the barley loaves and the little fishes. The supply is inadequate for the demand.

3. **Christ's Mastery of the Situation (10-13).** He first employs the means at hand. He insists upon a systematic arrangement of the five thousand beneficiaries. He pronounces a blessing upon the meager resources at their command. He calls the disciples into requisition as helpers. He satisfies all. He teaches a lesson in economy by requiring the fragments to be preserved (a feature of the story which we can scarcely fancy would be invented). He shows the fullness of His bounty by the excess of supply over demand.
4. **The Immediate Effect of the Miracle (14, 15).** The populace were persuaded that Christ was the greater prophet than Moses which had been predicted, and were determined forthwith to carry Him away to Jerusalem and crown Him their king at the Passover. Expecting a material kingdom, they were not yet capable of the true spiritual conception of the Messiah which Jesus was to teach them. Jesus must therefore reject their earthly undertaking, and having come down from the mountain toward the shore in order to perform this miracle, He now withdrew again to a mountain, this time to be entirely alone. Even His disciples, who might naturally be expected to share the expectations and ambitions of the people, were not permitted to accompany Him.

## II. THE SECOND SIGN—WALKING ON THE WATER (16-21).

This incident is also related in Matt. xiv, 22-33, where it is said that Jesus "constrained His disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side," and in Mark vi, 45-52. In both places other details omitted here are recorded.

1. **On the Sea Without Christ (16-19).** At evening time they put forth to reach Capernaum. Darkness comes down upon them, and the Master is absent. A storm sweeps down upon them with the suddenness which travelers testify is common in that region.



They are in great peril when they have gone about half way across the lake. Then Jesus appears.

2. **On the Sea With Christ (19-21).** It is in the fourth watch, as Mark records, that is, somewhere between three and six o'clock in the morning, when they descry Jesus in the dim light of the approaching day. At first they are terrified. But the Master dispels their fears. He is not a phantom, but their great helper. Matthew inserts the episode of Peter attempting to walk on the sea. The other evangelists omit it. When they received Jesus into the boat their troubles were at an end. The winds ceased, the waves subsided, and they were brought to their desired haven.

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### Caring for the Crowd.

*"Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little."*

—JOHN vi, 7.

Fleischmann, the New York baker who originated the famous "Bread Line" which at midnight waited for the free distribution of all the bread which was left in the bakery at that hour, acquired a fortune through his business. But he secured a name more to be desired than great riches by means of his benevolence. When his body was carried to Greenwood Cemetery on the day of his funeral it was attended not only by the immediate circle of his wealthy friends, but also by a struggling and ragged band of poor people who had benefited by his bounty, and who scattered upon his grave what poor flowers they had been able to gather. "Give ye them to eat," said Christ, when He gazed upon the hungering multitude far from home, and multiplied the loaves and fishes at His disposal until they were more than enough to satisfy the requirements of the crowd.

This miracle is also a parable. If it were not, John might not have taken the trouble to record it, for he was always most concerned for the spiritual significance



of Christ's deeds. Jesus did enough other extraordinary things which prove His lordship over nature and His compassion for humanity to make this unnecessary, if there were nothing in it but the fact of satisfying the hunger of the crowd. The Master Himself certainly attached a profounder meaning to it, for He made it the basis of a very wonderful discourse on the Bread of Life. Many inspiring suggestions lie below the surface of this narrative which the thoughtful reader will readily discover. Among these the following appear.



Whenever an emergency arises in the work of Christ's disciples, money is not a consideration of the first importance, *if* Jesus is in the company. Philip apparently did not understand this. Modern disciples frequently show a similar lack of intelligence. Philip said in effect, "If we had plenty of money we could easily meet this emergency." He cast his calculating eye over the crowd swarming up the mountain side, panting, tired, and hungry, and, quickly estimating what it would cost to feed this multitude, he said within himself, "This is an occasion when a well-filled wallet would be a positive convenience." The financial aspects of the problem were uppermost in his mind. Twentieth century Christians betray the same kind of solicitude. They recognize that it is the peculiar work of the Church to provide what the tired, panting, exhausted world requires. They fancy that an abundance of money would afford the perfect solution of the difficulties which embarrass them. In this impression they are sadly astray.

Service is really the consideration of first importance—a man ready to act, and possessing qualities which equip him for action. A man of distinction once declared that, if he had a fortune, he would station a Christian preacher in every great center of the world's population and command him to tell the story of the Cross to the surging crowds. If this transaction were effected, the important element in it would be the men who were selected for this great work, and not the money

paid to them. It is conceivable that an army of men might enlist for such a service who would be unqualified to fulfill its sublime requirements. It is the happy habit of millionaires in our day to bestow great sums of money upon institutions of learning to erect buildings and to endow scholastic chairs, but in every such case the thing of prime importance is that the men who occupy these chairs and teach in these buildings shall be endowed with qualifications necessary for their great business. It is conceivable that a vast body of men might be subsidized to assume these positions who would not adequately fulfill the obligations laid upon them.

Service has no real financial equivalent. When the salary of the President of the United States was doubled a few years ago, it was not with expectation of getting twice as much work out of him as had heretofore been exacted. His value to the country depends not upon his actual income, but upon his personal qualities.

We often place too high an estimate upon the purchasing power of money. It can not buy happiness, or health, or wisdom, or character. It can not secure divine approval or human favor. The epitaph written for Epictetus ran as follows: "I was Epictetus, a slave, and maimed in body, and a beggar for poverty, and *dear to the immortals*." The body of Epictetus could be bought, but his mind could not be enslaved, and his soul was absolutely free. Character is the supreme asset of life, and character is the final qualification for service.

The best things in human history have been achieved without money. Jesus had no *income*, but His *output* was enormous. Hardly anybody in Nazareth was poorer than He was, but Cæsar on his throne was not more munificent in gifts. When the apostles were just embarking on an enterprise which was to shake the world, they were forced to tell a beggar that they had neither silver nor gold. At a time when he was writing documents which would influence the literature of all the following centuries, and was doing work which would affect all modern civilization, Paul was compelled to keep body and soul together by stitching tent-cloth. Some of the

greatest monuments of literary genius have been the productions of men reduced to abject poverty. They sold their books to buy bread, but the world did not contain money enough to purchase their intellects.

What Philip needed was not money, but a sense of obligation strong enough to enable him to see his immediate duty. The thing required was not to send the people away, but to send them away filled. The question was not how to get rid of a hard situation, but how to meet it adequately. The readiness to serve is the first requisite, and if Jesus is in the company the ability to serve will follow.



Nevertheless, if financial expenditure should prove to be the method of meeting any emergency arising in the work of Christ's disciples, it must be employed, if Jesus is in the company. Perhaps Philip would have balked at this proposition. One can fancy him saying, "We can not afford to spend thirty-five dollars on bread for this mob." Probably that would have bankrupted the entire company. If every wallet in their possession had been emptied it might not have reached two hundred denarii; but if they had this amount in their possession, and Jesus required it, there would be no room for controversy. His command is, "Give ye them to eat." The cost of answering this draft is not to be counted. The point is that with Christ's compassion on the multitude there was nothing to do short of feeding the whole mass.

The amount of help we give to the miserable is exactly proportioned to the amount of genuine compassion we have. Some people are more liberal in their opinions than they are in their contributions. A sentiment of pity is of no value unless it is transmuted into an act of mercy. Not only is it fruitless so far as the object of compassion is concerned, but it is positively injurious to the man who expresses it in mere words of sympathy. You have felt on shipboard the disagreeable sensation produced when the screw of the vessel has been flung out of the water by the heaving of the sea. Released from

the resistance of the water, the propeller spins around with incredible rapidity, making the ship tremble as though smitten by some terrible blow. The wear upon the machinery in such an event is doubtless more severe than would be effected by numberless revolutions in the ordinary way. So compassion expended in mere sentimental words, and finding no expression in practical deeds, will shake the whole moral fabric of a man and inflict permanent injury upon his soul.

At a Christmas celebration on the west coast of Africa a few years ago, when converted natives brought off their meager possessions to show their devotion to Christ a young girl only recently saved from paganism brought a silver coin worth about eighty-five cents, and handed this to the missionary as her gift to the Savior. The good man was astounded at the size of the offering, and hesitated to accept it, supposing it must have been obtained dishonestly; but when he delicately asked for an explanation of this lavish gift, the convert told him that she had gone to a neighboring planter and bound herself out to him as a slave for the rest of her life for this coin. Thus she brought the whole monetary equivalent of her life and placed it as a single gift at the feet of her Lord. That is the kind of consecration which Jesus expects of those who have sworn eternal fealty to Him. It is not our duty to enslave ourselves to any human master. It is our rare privilege to dedicate ourselves and our substance entirely to our Lord.



In meeting an emergency which may arise in the work of Christ's disciples, calculations are not to be based on the extent of one's personal resources, if Jesus is in the company. Andrew evidently did not realize this. He suggests that the boy with the five barley loaves and the two small fishes can be induced to part with his store, but he asks, "What are these among so many?" The response of Jesus is, "Give ye them to eat; ye have not reckoned with Me." In the presence of that throng the paltry biscuits and insignificant fishes were not worth

mentioning. But Jesus was worth mentioning. When Antigonus was about to enter a great sea fight with the armada of Ptolemy, and his pilot saw with consternation the vast array before him, he cried out with dismay, "See how many more than ourselves are against us!" but Antigonus replied, "It is true that if you count numbers they exceed us, but how much value do you place upon me?"

The Church frequently says, "We suffer great limitations; we are badly located, our environment is unfavorable, our outlook is unpromising; circumstances are against us; no adequate funds are in our treasury; our loaves and fishes are absurdly inadequate." But all the time Jesus is virtually saying, "You may have no money, and you may have no commissary department, but you have ME."



There is, in fact, no emergency arising in the work of Christ's disciples that has not been anticipated, if Jesus is in the company. The record says that He asked Philip about the possibility of buying food for this crowd in order to prove His disciple, and not to satisfy His own mind, for "He Himself knew what He would do." Man's embarrassment is Christ's convenience. "Send them away," said the disciples; "Make the men sit down," said Jesus. The preparedness of Jesus is one of His most striking peculiarities. He knew what He would do when He looked out upon this great multitude. He knew that under His guiding providence the loaves and the fishes would be multiplied into a sufficient feast for all. He knew what He would do when His terror-stricken disciples called Him from His sleeping posture in the stern of the boat tossed by the turbulent waves of the sea. He knew that He would stand out upon the prow of the staggering craft and send His voice out o'er the boiling waters, and calm the waves, and quiet the winds. He knew what He would do when He was informed that His friend Lazarus had died. He knew that He would stand before His rock-hewn sepulcher, and bid



the man come forth, and would receive Him anew into joyous fellowship. He knew what He would do when men had cruelly slain Him upon the cross, and loving hands had placed Him in the tomb. He knew that He would break the bars of death, and stand forth to greet the rising sun and to receive the acclaim of the faithful as King of men. He knew what He would do when the persecution following the martyrdom of Stephen threatened to devastate the infant Church. He knew He would scatter His followers everywhere throughout the Roman Empire and ultimately conquer it to the remotest bound. He knew what He would do when for two hundred years the arms of paganism were turned against His followers. He knew that He would raise up men of culture and wisdom who would turn the very weapons of heathen philosophy against His relentless foes, smiting them hip and thigh, and making the wrath of man to praise Him. He knew what He would do when gross darkness brooded o'er the face of the Church in the Middle Ages. He knew He would summon such men as Huss, Wyclif, and Tyndale to unlock the treasures of the divine wisdom and bring the light of truth upon the minds of men. He knew what He would do when in later centuries error and superstition had crept into the teachings of His recreant ministers. He knew He would call out such champions of the faith as Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, who would propagate anew the forgotten doctrine of salvation by faith in His name. He knew what He would do when in the eighteenth century the religious life of the English people had been sapped by rationalism in literature, unfaithfulness in the ministry, and lax morals in the Church. He knew He would call out Whitefield and the Wesleys, and the noble host of their associates, who would preach evangelical religion throughout the dominions of the Anglo-Saxon civilization, and summon the Church to more earnest endeavor than had ever blest mankind. He knew what He would do when French infidelity had poisoned institutions of learning in America and had secured for its advocates some of the most eminent men in the nation.

He knew that by the revival of pure and undefiled religion, through the preaching of flaming evangelists, He would revolutionize the civic, social, and moral condition of the whole American people. He knows now what He will do when His Church is confronted by serious and apparently unhopeful conditions, which bilious-minded critics are prone to regard as incurable. He will gird Himself and meet the issues with omnipotent energy, and show Himself triumphant over every opposing force.

It is ours to remember that loyalty to Him demands our perfect submission to His will. If the means at our disposal are placed under His control they will be indefinitely multiplied under the power of His beneficent purpose. We do not know whether the food used to refresh the throng was multiplied in the hands of Jesus when He blessed it, or in the hands of the disciples when they delivered it, or in the hands of the crowd when they received it; but it was multiplied. That is the fact of significance. We do not know whether our money begins to grow when the minister prays over it, or when the officials of the Church begin to distribute it, or when the beneficiaries of our bounty receive it; but it does grow under some subtle law of Divine Providence. If we yield our all to Him, it is His purpose to increase our store until it becomes sufficient to meet every demand made upon it.

Whittier, in one of his most beautiful poems, describes the Abbot of a monastery kneeling at the foot of the altar absorbed in prayer. His devotions are disturbed by a sound outside the walls, which seems like the wail of a lost soul. Looking from the casement, he sees a wretched woman, her white hair flowing in the wind, her face distorted with agony, her wrinkled hands clasped in pathetic appeal, crying for alms. Her first-born son is enslaved to the Moors. She begs for money for his redemption. The Abbot's soul is moved with compassion. "What I can, I give—my prayers," he replies. But the woman implores him not to mock her suffering. It is not prayers, but gold, she craves. Even while she speaks perhaps her first-born is dying. Then



the Abbot tells her that the monks are forever giving, and therefore have nothing. The woman cries: "Give me the silver candlesticks on either side of the great crucifix!" Then the Abbot, acknowledging that God loves mercy more than sacrifice, with trembling hands, takes down the silver candlesticks and places them within the beggar's palms.

"And as she vanished down the linden shade,  
He bowed his head and for forgiveness prayed.

So the day passed, and when the twilight came,  
He woke to find the chapel all aflame,  
And, dumb with grateful wonder, to behold  
Upon the altar candlesticks of gold."

Jesus asks not only your gold and silver, bearing the superscription of the nation you serve, but the gold and silver of your intelligence, your social position, your intellectual ability, your refined character. And, if, with perfect consecration, you yield to His compassionate spirit, He will doubtless multiply your power and influence as wondrously as He multiplied the loaves and fishes by the shore of sacred Galilee.

## XV.

# DISCOURSE ON THE BREAD OF LIFE.

## CHAPTER VI. 22-71.

The doctrine of the Word made flesh shows us God uniting Himself most intimately with our nature, manifesting Himself in a human form, for the very end of making us partners of His own perfection.—*Channing*.

THE people had wished to make Jesus a king. He had escaped first by retiring to a mountain solitude, and then by passing over the lake to the western shore, evidently not far from Capernaum. Hither with some difficulty many of those who had witnessed His feeding of the multitude followed Him. (22-25.)

### I. DISCOURSE ON THE BREAD OF LIFE (26-59).

This deliverance falls into three divisions or conversations: *a.* Verses 26-40; *b.* Verses 41-51; *c.* Verses 52-59.

#### 1. First Conversation (26-40).

Question: How is life sustained?

Answer: The Son of man gives life.

- (1) *The Mistaken Quest of Life* (26, 27). Introduced by a simple appeal: "When camest thou hither?" Response of Jesus equivalent to saying, "You do not seek Me but what you can obtain from Me, and your desires are material, not spiritual." Insight of Jesus. False aims in modern seekers after Christ. Work for imperishable food. This the Son of man will provide. He has been authorized to do so, and His mission has been approved by many wonderful signs.

- (2) *The True Way to Life* (28, 29). Belief in the Son of man. Introduced by the question, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?"
- (3) *The Proof of this Process* (30-33). Introduced by a question: "What attestation of this have we?" Moses and the manna proffered as an illustration of the kind of evidence they desire. Jesus responds that the proof is in the gift itself (33).
- (4) *The Son of Man the Gift of Life in Himself* (34, 35). Introduced by a request: "Evermore give us this bread!" The satisfying nature of this food for life.
- (5) *Appropriation of the Gift Through Faith* (36-38). Some do not exercise faith in the Son of man, and hence do not receive life. Those whom the Father draws, that is, who have the right spiritual perception, do appropriate this gift.
- (6) *Life thus Appropriated a Present Possession, to be followed by Resurrection* (39, 40). Distinctions in faith. Discriminate between faith which is merely belief resting on sufficient evidence and faith which is the personal appropriation of Christ.

## 2. Second Conversation (41-51).

Question: How can the Son of man give eternal life?

Answer: The Son of man gives Himself.

- (1) *The Jews Scandalized* (41, 42). Introduced by a murmuring among themselves (41). Disturbed by the claim that a man whose pedigree and history they know is the source of life (42).
- (2) *Spiritual Preparation Required* (43, 44). Without the drawing of the Father men can not apprehend this unique idea. From the human side it is based on man's will; on the Divine side it rests on God's power.
- (3) *Old Testament Promises* (45, 46). The Father draws men by enlightening them. Jesus does not quote the ancient Scriptures to show the ground of

His teaching, but to confirm His doctrines in the minds of those who rely upon these writings.

- (4) *The Necessary Co-operation of the Believer* (47-50). The teaching is not sufficient. Receiving and appropriating are indispensable. This is an act of faith without which the Divine gift is in vain.
- (5) *The Gift of the Son of Man* (51). Himself in the fullness of His humanity. "Flesh" is human nature in its entirety. Death foreshadowed in the word, to be brought out more clearly in "blood."

### 3. Third Conversation (52-59).

Question: How can one partake of the flesh of the Son of man?

Answer: By a spiritual union with Him.

- (1) *The Puzzle of the Jews* (52). Introduced by a striving among themselves. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" The bread and the flesh are now identical.
- (2) *The Teaching in Detail* (53-55). "Flesh" and "blood." Life and death are plainly involved. Only by partaking of the virtues of Christ's life and death can the believer appropriate by faith the Son of man.
- (3) *Personal Union Between Christ and the Believer Thus Established* (56). Christ the source of life, and the end of life. The mutuality of relation.
- (4) *Fullness of Life Thus Secured* (57, 58). As the life of the Father is imparted to the Son, so the life of the Son of man is imparted to all true believers.

## II. ISSUE OF THE DISCOURSE IN BELIEF AND UNBELIEF (60-71).

The discourse on the Bread of Life is a trial to the faith of the disciples.

- 1. **The Murmuring Followers (60).** The "hard saying." Not difficult to understand, but to accept. In some respects revolting to thought. Chiefly hard to receive because it involved submission and sacrifice.

2. **The Response of Jesus (61, 62).** Greater difficulties are yet to appear; for example, return to heaven of the Son of man.
3. **Spiritual Perception Necessary to Discipleship (63-65).** "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."
4. **The Disciples Divided (66).** The strain upon their loyalty is too great for any but the most spiritually-minded to bear. They have hoped for a monarch who would bring them glory; they are promised only a Savior who will bring them eternal life. The balancing of earthly and divine interests turns the scale toward self and away from God.
5. **Peter's Confession of Faith (67-69).** Three affirmations—1. No one else to whom he can go; 2. Jesus is entirely sufficient; 3. He is the Messiah. The trusting disciple will therefore cleave to Him.
6. **The Apostasy of Judas Predicted (70, 71).** Even the choice of the Lord does not prevent one of the apostles from becoming an apostate.

## A Hard Saying.

*"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*—JOHN vi, 51.

"This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" exclaimed the disciples when Christ had finished His wonderful discourse on the Bread of Life. "Saying" means doctrine, and "hard" means difficult to accept. It was not incomprehensible, but it was unpalatable. The reasons for their murmuring against it are not obscure.

In the first place, the teaching was offensive to their natural propensities and to their worldly traditions. It placed the emphasis on spiritual rather than material needs. "Labor not for the meat which perisheth," said Jesus, "but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." He tells them that they have not swarmed after Him because they were eager for Him, but because they wanted to secure some advantage for themselves. They had a joyous recollection of the loaves and the fishes with which He had fed them the day before.

Is not that the way of the world? If it could be made apparent that attending public worship would increase business, multiply incomes, and insure various material benefits, the churches in America would overflow with auditors, and we should need to station policemen in front of these edifices to prevent the people from breaking in before the doors were open.

These old Jews were a very religious people. That is the characteristic which distinguishes them as a nation. It has often been observed that the ideal of the Greek was knowledge, of the Roman social order, and of the Jew religion. But the Hebrew has always wanted to mix his religion with politics, social advantage, financial profit. And whenever a leader has appeared who has sought to turn his mind toward exclusively spiritual ideals, the attempt has not met with popular approval. It was the general conviction of the Jew in olden time



that it was profitable to serve Jehovah, and the only blessing he recognized was the blessing of prosperity.

There are others of like persuasion, though with a different nationality. We Americans are a very religious people. We say so on the coins we mint, in the Thanksgiving proclamations which we issue, in the prayers we pronounce over legislatures, congresses, and political conventions. But we also put a large element of self-interest into our religious sentiment. We can not fully indorse the Christian dictum, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," as a practical working basis for life. "Take no thought for the morrow," we think a very delusive kind of idealism. We have a sharp eye to the main chance.

Epictetus records that when Archelaus sent a message to Socrates informing him that it was his royal intention to make him rich, the philosopher bade the messenger tell his master that at Athens four quarts of meal might be bought for three-pence, and the fountains were overflowing with water. Such a contempt for wealth can scarcely be understood by the people of this generation, and the policy of avoiding riches for the sake of living more simply would be scouted by the majority of men in our time as a piece of folly. The meat that perishes has a very large claim on the attention of the average American. This is not strange, in view of the fact that every book and periodical he reads, every voice that smites his ear on the street, and every other impression which is made on his mind bids him hurry to acquire, lest some one outstrip him in the race. The minister of religion, with his solemn face and his admonishing tone, saying, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but labor for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life," is regarded as an unwelcome intruder.

Nevertheless, without this admonition we should sink into satisfaction with the sordid, our very successes dragging us down to deeper pits of spiritual degradation. The nobler ideals which are native to the soul would be submerged. We should live among the straw and stubble of things, and never see the stars shining above our

heads. Teachers of religion can not be too insistent in thrusting their principles upon our attention. They must lay their hands earnestly upon our shoulders and point us pressingly to the Celestial City, or we shall be swallowed up in the City of Destruction. However irritating he may be, the man who draws us away from material interests to spiritual ideals is an angel of God.



Christ's doctrine of the Bread of Life was offensive to these Jews also, because it appeared unreasonable to their carnal minds that a man of their own society should identify himself with the spiritual food which he declared was essential for their lives. When Jesus had impressed them with the thought that in the quest of life the spiritual interests of men are of paramount importance, and they had asked Him how they might work for these interests, He told them to begin by believing in Him. When they demanded some sign which should authenticate Him to their minds, He replied that the proof of His assertions would be found in the spiritual food itself. When they cried, "Lord, evermore give us this bread!" He responded, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." This was altogether too great a tax on their credulity. "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" they ask. "How can He have come down from heaven? He was born in Bethlehem. He was brought up in Nazareth. He lived in Galilee until recently. He the bread of life? It is preposterous."

That is the way in which men attempt to throw off the claims of Christ upon their lives to-day. They say, "Your human Jesus can not be the ultimate source of life. It is unreasonable." They wish to get into an argument about it. But the method of Jesus is better. He will not discuss the question. He simply reaffirms the claim, "I am the bread of life. . . . This is the bread which cometh down from heaven. . . . I am the living bread." The soul that feeds on the Bread will not be

troubled by the genealogical table of Jesus. The proof that Christ is food and drink to the soul is found in partaking of Him. Not long before his death Charles Kingsley was discussing with a friend some of the profoundest doctrines of our holy religion, when he suddenly broke out with the exclamation, "I can not, can not live without this man Christ Jesus!" That is the experience of all who have gone to Him for the satisfaction of their soul-hunger.

The figure Jesus uses is unquestionably a very striking one. But He was dealing with very obtuse people, who must be shocked into some kind of moral sensibility before they could apprehend the truth. "I am the bread of life" was calculated to accomplish that result. "He that cometh to Me," "He that believeth on Me," "He that feedeth on Me," would probably wake up the dullest mind. Yet the figure is not difficult or incongruous. Are there not men who feed on Shakespeare and the poets, on Plato and the philosophers? Do we not speak of drinking in the charm of a painting, the beauty of a statue, the grandeur of an architectural pile, the sublimity of a mountain peak? Is not patriotism nourished by the lives of heroes who infect their fellows with their own sacrificial spirit? Is not patience developed in the souls of others by the gentle sufferer who influences the mood of an entire household? And do not these analogies assist us to perceive how Christ can feed the souls of men by imparting Himself to them? Have we not witnesses enough to the sustaining power of communion with God? Has not the famished one often cried out with the Psalmist, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God?" And has not the cry been heard, and the longing satisfied? Did not Jesus quote the saying of the olden time, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God?" And have not multitudes greater than that which Jesus fed by the shore of Galilee testified, "He hath prepared a table before me in the presence of mine enemies?"

Captain Allen Francis Gardiner is an impressive ex-

ample. Actuated by the devout passion to spread the Gospel among the degraded heathen of Patagonia, he landed with one or two companions on the terrible coast of Picton Island. Abandoned by the rescue party which should have come, these poor men slowly starved to death, but their faith remained strong and invincible to the end. After weeks of incredible suffering from cold and hunger, Gardiner wrote, "God has kept me in perfect peace." When the bodies of these heroes were found a month after they had perished, the sailors who had come too late to deliver them cried like children. But they found that Gardiner had painted on a rock beside the cavern where he and his comrades had taken refuge from the cold a hand pointing downwards, and beneath it the words, "My soul, wait thou only upon God." He had taken of the Bread of Heaven, and had been nourished unto eternal life.



Christ's doctrine of the Bread of Life was offensive also to these Jews because it scandalized their sense of propriety. At least this is the pretense they made. When Jesus said, "The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world," they professed to be appalled. "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" they exclaim. Jesus simply drives the affirmation still deeper into the quick, and says, "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." And we may imagine these troubled disputants saying among themselves, "Suppose He is the Son of man, suppose He is the true revelation of God, suppose He is the source of life—how can we partake of His flesh and blood? The thought is abhorrent to every properly instructed Jew."

Do we also stumble at this teaching? And shall we endeavor to master the difficulty by adopting the plan which Rome has employed, and in the sacrifice of the mass say that, by the charm of a priest's words the wafer and the wine become the veritable body and blood of

Christ, which taken into the human system effect a spiritual reinvigoration? It is a species of pious cannibalism, if one believes it a genuine transaction. It is a pious fraud, if one believes it is a mere figure, and that this is all Jesus meant by His solemn and oft-repeated words. Or shall we like the Jew repudiate the teaching altogether?

Nay; Jesus has provided the key which unlocks this mystery. He has given the terms of interpretation. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." This is a spiritual truth, and it can only be spiritually apprehended. The revelation of the Divine Father is through a human Son. The Word has been made flesh. Flesh signifies the fullness of humanity. The appropriation of that human Christ, the partaking of the virtues of His life and death, the assimilation of His divine nature, by an act of faith in Him, which is utter dependence on Him—that is what is intended by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. To consume His body would not give eternal life. Parkman tells of an Indian who fancied he could imbibe the heroic spirit of a dying Jesuit priest by drinking his blood, but no enlightened mind dreams that Christ's power to nourish the souls of men is transmitted in any such magical fashion. But the quality of His life is not the low tone of ours. His is not the defective morality that mars our characters. He is the perfection of spiritual beauty and strength. He is the Son of God. We know that if we can partake of His life we shall be like Him. Those old Jews knew well enough what He meant. They were not so devoid of poetry and moral perception as they pretended to be. But they did not favor the doctrine because they desired a Messiah who would enable them to fulfill their earthly and political aspirations. We know full well what Jesus means, and if we do not accept His teaching it is not because we can not understand it, but because it runs against our worldly tastes.

It is not enough for us to look at the Bread of Life, to comment upon the nutritiousness of this spiritual food, to acknowledge that we need it. We can do all this and

starve to death, while every consideration warns us to partake; as a child may be famishing with hunger, while he pushes his pinched face up against the window of a bake-shop, looking eagerly at the things he has not money to buy. "Think oftener of God than you breathe," said an old pagan philosopher. "Let discourse of God be renewed daily, more surely than your food." That is well, but not enough. Take God into perpetual communion with your soul through faith in Jesus Christ. Then the doctrine of the Bread of Life will not be a hard saying, but sweet and comforting beyond the choicest gifts of the world.

Bread of heaven,  
Feed me till I want no more.



## XVI.

# JESUS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

## CHAPTER VII.

This Gospel speaks a language to which no parallel whatever is to be found in the whole compass of literature: such childlike simplicity, with such contemplative profundity; such life and such deep rest; such sadness and such severity; and above all, such a breath of love.

—*Tholuck.*

**Now the Scenery is Shifted.** An example of John's dramatic method. He omits much of the ministry in Galilee which is recorded in Matt. xiv—xviii, simply saying, "Jesus was walking in Galilee," and giving the reason for His absence from Judæa—the Jews were seeking to kill Him. There is thus an interval of six months of which John records nothing. He suddenly transfers Jesus to Jerusalem, where the crisis immediately becomes more acute.

### I. THE CHALLENGE OF HIS BRETHREN (1-9).

The Feast of Tabernacles described.

1. **Jesus Urged by His Brethren to Attend (2-5).** Their motives probably sincere. No treachery indicated in the suggestion. Sharing the opinions of the Jews respecting the character of the Messiah, they did not believe in the claim of Jesus, but wanted the matter tested in Jerusalem, where His works would have more publicity. Their arguments are apparently sound.
2. **The Response of Jesus (6-9).** It was not opportune for Him to go yet. A hint that following their advice would precipitate conflict resulting in prema-



ture death for Him. No peril for them because they had not aroused the hatred of the world. They were in practical accord with the spirit of their times.

## II. DISCOURSES AT THE FEAST (10-39).

1. **Introductory (10-13).** His appearance at the Feast, and the impression made by it. Enters somewhat clandestinely. Jews eagerly seek for Him. People divided in their gossip about Him (12). No open discussion of Him "for fear of the Jews" (13). Subservience of the people to the authorities.
2. **First Discourse (14-36).** Three groups of hearers:
  - (1) *The Jews Generally* (14-24). About the middle of the Feast in the Temple (14). They marvel at His literary ability (15). Jesus attributes it to God (16), whose doctrines He teaches. Gives a method of testing His doctrines (17, 18). Accuses them of being false to their own law (19). Shows them their inconsistency (20-24), and awakens their resentment.
  - (2) *Citizens of Jerusalem* (25-31). Their query: This is the man the rulers are trying to capture, yet He speaks openly; why do they not silence Him? Do they hesitate because they fear He may be the Christ? We know better. The Messiah will come mysteriously, not openly (25-27). The response of Jesus: You know Me well enough, but not My Father who sent Me (28, 29). Their unsated anger (30). His time was not yet come. The people are disposed to believe in Him, being doubtful whether the Messiah would do more miracles than Jesus had performed, to their knowledge (31).
  - (3) *The Police of the Sanhedrin* (32-36). Sent to apprehend Him (32). The puzzling declaration of Jesus about going away whither they could not reach Him (33, 34). Their unsatisfactory attempts to explain it (35, 36).

3. **Second Discourse (37-39).** The last day of the Feast. Christ's enigmatical saying. Perhaps occasioned by the libations of water made at the morning sacrifice on each day of the Feast (37, 38). Compare Isa. lv, 1; Rev. xxii, 17. John's interpretation of this utterance. This passage (39) an evidence that the evangelist wrote a long time after the events he recorded.

### III. CONFLICTING RESULTS OF THE DISCOURSES (40-52).

1. **Impression Made Upon the Populace (40-44).** Some said, "This is the Prophet." Others, "This is the Christ." Some, "Christ can not come out of Galilee, according to the Scriptures" (40-42). A division of the people, but despite the desire of some to seize Him, no man laid hands upon Him (43, 44). Observe how the world is still, and always will be, thus divided.
2. **Impression Made Upon the Officers (45-49).** No opportunity had arisen for taking Jesus. His words had profoundly impressed the Sanhedrin police (46). Moreover, his hour had not come (30). When that should arrive there would be no difficulty. Read xiii, 27; xviii, 6; xix, 11. The rejoinder of the Pharisees (48, 49) is an appeal to the authority of precedent. The dignitaries had not believed in Jesus. The rude populace was not to be relied upon. The officers ought not to have been influenced by ignorant opinions.
3. **Divided Sentiment of the Sanhedrin (50-52).** The gentle protest of Nicodemus. Compare Gamaliel's speech. (Acts v, 34-42.) The Pharisees were condemning the people for that of which they were themselves guilty, a violation of the law. The accused was entitled to be heard. (Deut. i, 16, 17.) The Pharisees retort that Galilee is no place to look for greatness (52; 41, 42).

### Opinions About Jesus.

*"So there was a division among the people because of Him."*—JOHN vii, 43.

Though Dean Farrar was the privileged friend of Queen Victoria, he seldom referred to this distinction. But he did so on the occasion of the first anniversary of the accession of Edward VI to the throne of England, during the service in Canterbury Cathedral, when he related that Queen Victoria, after hearing one of her chaplains preach at Windsor on the second advent of Christ, spoke to the Dean about it and said, "O, how I wish that the Lord would come during my lifetime." "Why does your majesty feel this very earnest desire?" asked the great preacher. With her countenance illuminated by deep emotion the queen replied, "Because I should so love to lay my crown at His feet." In the time of His flesh Jesus had only hatred and hostility from the rulers of both church and state in Palestine. The common people heard Him gladly, but the Scribes and Pharisees heard Him resentfully. In our day monarchs vie with the most lowly in offering devotion to the Son of man.

Not long before his death, Franz Delitzsch, the famous German exegete and Hebrew scholar, sent an account of his conversion to a religious periodical, in which these words occur: "After passing through the ordinary schools I came out a complete rationalist. I felt a drawing toward God, but the person of Jesus was for me enveloped in deep darkness. I went to the university to study philosophy and philology. Seeking for truth, I plunged into the systems of the German philosophers, of whom Fichte was especially attractive to me. A university friend, who had found Jesus and loved Him, worked incessantly to bring me to the faith. I withstood him long, but to-day I can point to the spot in the street of my native city where a beam from above placed me in the same condition as Thomas when he exclaimed, 'My Lord and my God!' I then studied theology, and mingled with Christian families, and the three years of

my university course were the sweetest of my life—the spring-time of my spiritual love.”

The person of Jesus has always been “enveloped in deep darkness” for many thoughtful people; but when any soul passes through the spiritual crisis described by Delitzsch, the mystery of Christ’s being no longer prevents confession of faith in His eternal deity. “What think ye of Christ?” is the question which persists wherever the Gospel is preached. The Pharisees tried to elude it when Jesus thrust it at them, and said, “He is the son of David.” But He wound them up in their own snares, and sent them away discomfited. The unreasoning populace said, “We think him Elias, or John the Baptist, or Jeremias, or some other of the old prophets.” Nicodemus, who interviewed Him by night, said, “Rabbi, Thou art a teacher come from God.” The brutal mob which bore Him away to a prejudiced tribunal said, “We think Him worthy of death. Away with Him!” The centurion who with his soldiers stood guard around His cross, and beheld the darkness and felt the earthquake which attended His death, cried out, “Truly this man was the Son of God!” Simon Peter, with a still deeper insight, exclaimed, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of God.”

There are no fresh opinions about the person of Christ. All the schools of belief and unbelief which exist to-day were operative in the years of Christ’s earthly ministry, and in a general way had their representatives among those who discussed Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles, as recorded in John’s Gospel.



The people were divided then respecting His *character*. Some of them said, “He is a good man.” Others said, “No, He is a deceiver.” The dilemma still exists. If the claims which Jesus advanced were false, then He deceived His generation, and He can not be a good man. Say what you will about His virtues, acknowledge His miraculous powers, admit that “never man spake like this man;” yet if He foisted an imposture upon His age, He

was not a good man. There is nothing more terrible, nothing more wicked, than to deceive the people. He who lures an unsuspecting public to investments which he knows are doomed to failure, or imperils human life by structures which he knows are improperly built, receives the execration of mankind. But his guilt is light compared with the iniquity of him who betrays the faith of immortal souls by false teachings, or rears their hopes on the crumbling basis of a lie. If Jesus swerved a hair's breadth from absolute truth, He can not receive the tribute which He claims.

There is an alternative, which amazing rashness has sometimes suggested. If Christ were self-deceived, He could not be charged with dishonesty. The Jews put this suggestion into form when they said, "Thou hast a devil," by which they meant that He was beside Himself. On another occasion He had been the victim of a similar criticism because of His intense enthusiasm. Now He is taunted with madness because He has shown them that He knows they seek His life. Insanity is the only relief for the character of Jesus, if it be proven that He deceived the people. But it requires a madman to believe that Jesus had other than a faultless mind, in the face of His incomparable words. And His challenge, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" remains unanswered to this day.



The people were divided respecting His *works*. "Look at His miracles," some say. "When Christ cometh will He do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" But others suggested that His works were probably wrought through diabolical influence. They were good works doubtless, but they proceeded from a bad source. The gross inconsistency of this assumption would make it incredible, if something like it had not appeared frequently in history. The melancholy story of witchcraft stains the pages of human annals through some of the most intelligent periods of the world's career. The wonder-worker is always in great peril. People

will kill him just because he has such extraordinary gifts. And if his life is saved, his reputation will be destroyed. The censors of public opinion will ascribe infernal motives to him, or they will empty his works of any deep significance.

Persons say in our times, "Don't talk to me of miracles. I have seen too many to believe in them." They remember that, as intelligence increases and the processes of nature become more clearly understood, marvels are wrought by ordinary means, which a former generation would have thought impossible without supernatural interference. The evidential value of miracles is very slight to many minds. Such persons suggest the words attributed to Abraham in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus: "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

Thus people are still divided respecting Christ's works. Either these wonders were not performed, they say, or if they were actually wrought, they were not above the natural order, and in any case they mean nothing. But on every supposition as to their character they do signify a great deal. They are radiant with kindness, goodness, mercy, compassion, helpfulness. What would *you* do if you possessed supernatural power? Make money, achieve triumphs, smite your foes, and dazzle the world with your performances? But Jesus showed the sublimity of His virtue by using His power never for His own advantage, always for the profit of others.



The people were divided respecting His *office*. They said, "Perhaps this is the Messiah. At any rate the rulers permit Him to speak boldly, and say nothing to Him. Can it be that they have a feeling that this is the Christ? But this is impossible, for the Messiah will come mysteriously. As for this man, we know whence He is. His pedigree and family are familiar to us." Nevertheless, some of them said, "Of a truth this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." Still others



retorted, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scriptures said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem?" Their very question betrays their ignorance of His birth and parentage.

But He claims to be the Son of God. That is something more, as He interprets it, than the Jewish mind saw in being the Messiah. When Jesus said unto them, "Before Abraham was I am," they took up stones to hurl at Him. He deserved death, in their judgment, for having arrogated to Himself the attributes of God.

Moreover, the authorities were against Jesus, and the popular will is ever deferential to the opinions of the persons who bulk large in the public eye. "No man spake openly of Him for fear of the Jews"—the influential Jerusalem party. The rulers were quite ready to follow up the advantage which came to them from the subservience of the people, and when they detected any disposition to favor Jesus they asked, "Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed on Him?" And that was a very effective thrust.

These things puzzle a good many persons yet. Is Jesus "more than man, but less than God?" as some would have us think, if reason can tolerate such a conception. Or, is He all that John evidently believed Him to be, and that the Church has been teaching He is for long centuries? Are we ready with the confession of the martyr Pionius? When the consul asked him, "Whom dost thou worship?" he replied, "I worship Him who made the earth and stars, and gave me life, and is my God." "Dost thou mean Him who was crucified?" inquired the official. "Certainly I do, Him whom the Father sent for the salvation of the world."

Jesus is not always popular with the great. The rulers and the Pharisees in some instances discredit Him. His place in the individual heart depends upon the conviction which has been formed regarding His person. "Unto you, therefore, which believe He is precious, but unto them which be disobedient . . . a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense," says Peter. Every soul



must decide for himself. "What think ye of Christ?" There will always be "a division of the people because of Him." It is so here and now, and it will be so hereafter. The destiny of the race will turn upon the relation of men to the character of Christ.



An artist sent one of his students to the Apollo Belvedere in Rome, as the most perfect object of its kind in the world, and said to him, "Go and study it, and if you see no great beauty in it to captivate you, study it again. Go again and again until you feel its beauty, for be assured it is there."

Jesus has provided a similar method by which any devout soul can discover the ultimate truth respecting Himself. "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." Faith in Christ is not a triumph of the understanding, but an effect of obedience. Live in the atmosphere of His teachings, put yourself into communion with Him, order life in accordance with His precepts, and ascertain by this spiritual test whether it is possible to believe that He could be mistaken about Himself, or would undertake to deceive others.

John Stuart Mill, who was certainly not a theological partisan of evangelical Christianity, said, "That which, after all, to me would be the best and highest form of life would be to live as Jesus Christ would have approved." It is the line of proof which Jesus recommends—this conduct of life by the rule of what He pronounces good. He professes to reveal the will of God. Let a man pursue the course Jesus has marked out as the program of life. Not all at once will he see the full significance of Christ's person. But let him persevere in the test, and finally there will sweep down upon him the ineradicable conviction that He is the Christ, the Son of God.

Jean Maire was a private tutor in a family of the German nobility. He was an unbelieving rationalist, a

man of erudition and refinement, a good public speaker, but entirely destitute of personal religion. One of the neighboring ministers asked him to occupy his pulpit in his absence. He replied, "How can I preach what I do not believe?" "But you believe in God," said the pastor. "Yes, I do that," he rejoined. "And surely you believe that men should love Him?" "Doubtless," he said. "Well, then, preach on the words of Jesus, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, etc.' " He said, "I will try just to oblige you." He thought over the words, and made notes somewhat after this fashion: 1. We must love God. Reasons for this. 2. We must love Him with all our powers in very truth. Nothing less than this could satisfy God. 3. Do we thus love God? No. "Then," as he subsequently explained to his friends, "without any previously formed plan I was brought to see the need of a Savior. At that moment a new light broke upon my soul. I understood that I had not loved God, and that I required a Savior, and that Jesus was that Savior, and I loved and clung to Him at once. On the morrow I preached the sermon, and the third head was the chief, namely, the necessity of trusting to such a Savior as Jesus." An experience like that is sufficient commentary on the words of Jesus, "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine."

## XVII.

### JESUS AND THE FALLEN WOMAN.

#### CHAPTER VII, 53—VIII, 1-11.

If the heart studies the Christ as portrayed in this writing, it will need no other proof of His divinity.

—*Ellicott.*

#### An Interruption.

As soon as the attention of the reader is drawn to it, he perceives that this incident bears no necessary relation to the matter which precedes and follows it. In fact, it would be natural to join the 12th verse of Chapter VIII immediately to the 52d verse of Chapter VII. The insertion of this story interrupts the discourse of Jesus at the Feast of the Tabernacles without any apparent cause. The manner in which it is introduced, and the abrupt fashion in which, at its termination, the address of Jesus is resumed, show the awkwardness of its position here. In fact, some of the MSS. which contain it place it at the end of the Gospel, and one inserts it after vii, 36, where it certainly could be better accommodated than here.

These considerations raise the question—Does it really belong to the Gospel of John at all? The scholars are practically unanimous in saying that it does not. It is omitted by all the oldest Greek MSS. with a single exception. It differs from John's other writings both in vocabulary and structure. His customary expressions are not found in it. On the other hand, much of its language is foreign to his literary habit. The tone of the narrative is unlike his writings.

But while the story does not appear to belong to

John's Gospel, there is strong evidence that it is "an authentic fragment of Apostolic tradition." It is similar in style to the writings of the Synoptists, and several MSS. place it after Luke xxi, where it seems more appropriate. It evidently belongs to the period of the last visit to Jerusalem. It may well be regarded as a genuine part of the Gospel history. It reflects the true spirit of Christ. It may have been written on the margin of one copy of John's Gospel, and thence transferred to other MSS., and so passed into the received text. Papias, who flourished in the second century, preserves a narrative very similar to this. The origin of this story can not be located, and as the readings of the MSS. are exceedingly various, several hands may have wrought upon it. Yet it is an independent story, and not a variation of some other incident in the life of Jesus.

#### I. JESUS AND THE ACCUSERS (3-9).

Here is a plot to ruin Jesus, and this may account for its insertion at this point in John's Gospel. It is an illustration of the spirit with which the Jewish rulers are seeking the destruction of Christ. The diabolical meanness of it is shown by the method they employ. Jesus is no sooner seated among the people who have gathered to hear His teachings than the Scribes and Pharisees bring the poor creature into His presence who has already been under their inquisition. A low state of public morals is revealed by the fact that they dared conduct such a trial on the open streets of Jerusalem. They exhibit brutal indelicacy toward the woman by thus exposing her to shame. They might have referred her case to Christ without bringing her to Him. But their motive is not the conviction of this culprit, but the ruin of Jesus, and they will scruple at no baseness to accomplish it.

They propose a dilemma which they fancy He can not escape. "Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned, but what sayest Thou?" If He confirmed the Mosaic penalty He could be accused before

Pilate of violating Roman authority, which reserved to itself the right of pronouncing the death sentence. If He charged them to dismiss the woman or to abate the penalty, they could accuse Him before the Sanhedrin and discredit Him before the people as a false Messiah.

The Master first meets the contemptible trick, which resembles in a way the question about tribute money (Luke xx, 20-26), by perfect silence. He stoops and writes upon the pavement. It is the quiet rebuke of an innocent man. It is not certain that He wrote anything legible. His act may have been like that of any person who, in a moment of agitation, traces lines in the dust while reflecting on the situation. It has been suggested that He wrote on the ground to remind these false-hearted accusers of the tables of the law written with the finger of God. It has been fancied that He was recording the sins of those who were present. Perhaps, as Godet suggests, He wrote what He finally spoke, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," the first part being traced when He first lowered His head, and the second when after speaking He resumed His stooping posture. Plummer says, "They were hoping that He would explain away the seventh commandment, in order that they themselves might break the sixth." Christ's solution of the dilemma they proposed for His undoing struck home to these guilty men. It need not be supposed that Jesus intended to imply that each person present had been actually guilty of the same sin, but that each one would realize that he was potentially guilty, and many of them would know that by inclination, and judged by the higher law which Christ announced in the Sermon on the Mount, they were guilty in heart. By His challenge Jesus lifted the case out of the judicial domain to the moral ground, from the legal to the spiritual plane. He shows that there is a tribunal of the soul more exacting, though more tender, than that of any human court. The meaning of Christ's words is more fully understood by comparing Matt. vii, 1-5, and Rom. xiv, 4.

## II. JESUS AND THE ACCUSED (10, 11).

The Lord waits long enough for the accusers to slip away before He pays attention to the poor creature awaiting her sentence. Conscience has made cowards of all of them. They have gladly escaped the searching glance of the sinless man. Then Jesus lifts His eyes, and seeing the woman standing alone, asks, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" "No man, sir," she replies. The one man who because of His perfect purity has the right to stone her, on the broad principle of judgment He has announced, is before her. What will He do? It is an impressive moment. Two persons are alone, the compassionate Christ and the crestfallen sinner. "Neither do I condemn thee," Jesus exclaims. He came not to judge, but to save. Nevertheless, there is condemnation, not of the sinner, but of the sin. "Go, and sin no more." No words of forgiveness are spoken. They have not been asked. No word of peace is pronounced. He alone knows whether the woman is penitent or not, but He gives no sign of His knowledge. Yet He has hope of the sinner. He expects better things of her. He will send her out with hope in her own soul and with an inspiration to be true. Some of the Fathers thought this incident likely to be interpreted to the peril of those who would use it as an apology for lax morality. It is really one of the strongest warnings against the sin of unchastity in the whole Bible while it teaches at the same time the sweetest charity.



### The Compassionate Christ.

*"Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."*

—JOHN viii, 11.

A young English artist stood before his canvas one day painting a picture called "A Lost Woman." As the work grew under his hand his soul became more and more engrossed in the tragedy he was trying to portray. It represented a stormy night in winter. A poor woman, thinly clad, with her babe pressed to her bosom, was wending her way along a dark, deserted street. Faint lights flickered here and there, and all doors were closed and barred. As the artist depicted the agony on the unfortunate woman's face his emotion deepened, and he threw his brush aside and exclaimed, "Why not go out and seek to save the actually lost!" On the instant he forsook his studio and resolved to prepare himself for the ministry. He entered Oxford University, supporting himself by the aid of his brush till he had finished his course. He then plunged into the work of rescuing the perishing, which took him through the slums of London to the dark regions of Uganda. This is the story of Bishop Tucker of Africa, and, as a modern reproduction of the spirit of Jesus, it helps one to understand the Master's attitude toward the lost.

"I came not to judge the world, but to save the world," said Jesus. Asked to adjust a quarrel about an inheritance, He said, "Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" Once He was asked to determine whether a pious Jew ought to pay the Roman tax, and He said, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's." That He would appoint unto men their final judgment He did not disavow, and He announced the basis on which He would do it. But that would occur after He had been glorified and the nations were gathered before Him. For the present life of humanity He had no judgment to pronounce. "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." When, therefore, the Scribes and

Pharisees brought to Him a woman who had been proven guilty of that one sin which society will not condone in her sex, but which with rank injustice it views complacently in the other sex, He refused to render judicial sentence. With marvelous sagacity He said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." That was a sword thrust which found her accusers at their very hearts, and noiselessly they slipped out of the extemporized court, leaving the woman and the compassionate One face to face alone. "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" Jesus asks. "No man, Lord," she replies. "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." Thus the Master gave compassion, and not condemnation.



The compassion of Jesus was an evidence of His quick intelligence, and if His modern disciples only knew more, they too would be more compassionate. He understood the motive and the character of these accusers. He knew that they had no such abhorrence for the sin of this woman as they tried to make apparent. He knew that they had no such scrupulous regard for the Mosaic law as they professed, for the period was peculiarly lax in Jewish as well as Roman society. He knew, moreover, that in their hearts they were in many instances as culpable as the woman whom they sought to punish. Above all, He knew that their supreme purpose was to entangle Him in a dilemma from which He could not extricate Himself without on the one hand showing a clemency which would injure His reputation for righteousness, or on the other hand exercising a prerogative which the Roman law jealously guarded as its own.

Dante represents himself in his immortal epic as having his forehead incised by the angel's sword with seven P's—*peccata*—signifying the seven mortal sins which must be purged away, not because he had in every instance been actually guilty of these deadly iniquities, but because in himself he recognized the potentialities of

them all; as Goethe said, "I have never heard of a crime which I might not have committed." These accusers of the fallen woman, when confronted with the challenge to stone her if they found no similar evil in their own lives, confessed judgment instantly, and withdrew in silence. Jesus knew them perfectly.

He knew this woman as well. The circumstances of her life were all before Him. He knew the curse of her comradeship with bad men, who were infinitely more guilty of her sin than was she who had become the victim of their seductive blandishments. He knew the deep shame of her soul, the sharp darts of conscience which were piercing her heart. He knew the honest penitence which was welling up in her bosom, and He saw the tear-drop which agony and despair were forcing from her eyelids. He saw in her the image of God, for though the sun of virtue was nearly extinguished by the heavy clouds of her revolting life, yet the light faintly struggled to show itself. She was still a woman with the incalculable possibilities for good which are in every woman, however degraded she may have become. As St. Bernard has well said, "The divine image in man can be burned, but it can not be burned out."

That there were extenuating circumstances in her case, who can doubt? Was there ever such a sinner, for whom nothing could be said in apology? If we knew the inner life in its entirety, could we not find some little vestige of an excuse for a sin that often springs from an abuse of holy affection? The exhortation of Burns is justified:

Then gently scan your brother man,  
 Still gentler sister woman;  
 Though they may gang a kennin wrang,  
 To step aside is human.  
 One point must still be greatly dark,  
 The moving why they do it;  
 And just as lamely can ye mark  
 How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 't is He alone  
 Decidedly can try us ;  
 He knows each chord—its various tone,  
 Each spring—its various bias.  
 Then at the balance let 's be mute,  
 We never can adjust it ;  
 What 's done we partly may compute,  
 But know not what 's resisted.



The compassion of Jesus was an evidence of His exalted character. He who could say, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" refused to condemn this poor culprit. The noblest persons are ever the most compassionate with sinners. Those who are deficient in righteousness are usually the least charitable. The defaulting servant in the parable, who has been pardoned for a debt of a hundred pounds, is quite ready to hound to prison the man who owes him but fifty. He who has a beam in his own eye is most eager to remove the mote in his neighbor's eye. The censorious are often the most censurable. In every case they are lacking in the higher qualities of a godly life. For religion does not consist merely in what we call exact justice. Shylock was technically just, according to the terms of his bond, but miserably wicked according to the standards of the better morality. Lycurgus was just enough with his precise legislation for all the crimes in the calendar. Aristides was so just that his name became offensive to one of the noblest Athenians. God, who is goodness personified, is more than just. "His mercy endureth forever." There are righteous people whose hatred of sin is only equaled by their love for sinners. They attain the divine likeness.

The best Christians are those who feel the deepest repugnance for evil, conjoined with the sweetest compassion for evil-doers. John wrote his tender gospel from Ephesus, one of the most notoriously wicked cities of antiquity. No man in that dissolute metropolis witnessed its foulness with greater horror. Its temple of

Diana, housing hundreds of courtesans, and sanctioning the vilest lasciviousness, filled no pious soul with a deadlier loathing than he experienced. No man wrote more scathingly of sin than did he. Yet no preacher was more compassionate. No soul could reason more lovingly with the erring than did he. When Paul beheld Athens given up to idolatry, "his spirit was stirred in him," the record declares. The phrase is too mild. On the strength of the original language we are justified in saying that Paul suffered a paroxysm of distress. Yet observe how graciously he addresses the Athenians on Mars' Hill, and how gently and adroitly he undertakes to win them away from their pagan abuses. No man in Jerusalem could feel the abhorrence which Jesus had for the sins of His people. Yet when He denounced them He framed a lament that sounds its *miserere* over the long centuries. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

We may be sure that in this instance Jesus saw, as no other soul could, the vast abyss which yawned between what this woman might have been and what she had actually become. The loathsome character of her sin drove Him to momentary confusion and inexpressible disgust. Yet He was waiting to forgive her, while He struggled with the agony of a pure soul brought into sudden and unhappy contact with iniquity.

History tells us that Avidius Cassius, one of the most trusted generals of Marcus Aurelius, revolted against the Emperor, and drew after him a great army of soldiers. But when he had been nominal sovereign for only three months and six days, he was slain by some of his officers. His head was sent to the Emperor, but Marcus Aurelius held out no promise of reward to the assassin, for he regretted that his enemy had not lived long enough to afford him the luxury of a sincere forgiveness. When the correspondence of Cassius was brought to him, he consigned it to the flames unread.

This was like the act of Jesus, who standing before that fallen woman, found His divine delight not in pronouncing sentence upon her, but in proffering pity and encouragement. "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."



The compassion of Jesus is characteristic of His mission in the world. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. "Go, and sin no more" reveals the method of His work of redemption. Condemnation enough fell upon this sinner's sin. She could never escape the consequences of her fall. The universe is built on moral principles. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The law is inexorable. God's regulations suffer no amendment. It is the good fortune of the world that this is so. What more dreadful calamity could there be than a universe conducted on caprice? God is precise.

"For the world was built in order,  
And the atoms march in tune."

The astronomer has never any need to publish a bulletin announcing that a planet is behind time in its swing through its unbroken orbit. The chemist never has cause to declare that the proportions in which the elements will combine have been changed. This rectitude pervades the moral universe. Sin is lawlessness, and lawlessness hurls to ruin.

But no soul was ever saved in this fashion, for we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. The law destroys the law-breaker, and Jesus came not to destroy life, but to save it. His method is forgiveness. As a means of recovering humanity from sin this is novel. The method of nature is suffering. The method of law is penalty. The method of Christ is grace. And this method is effective. Forgiving men their sins is the divine way of withdrawing them from their sins.



Jean Valjean, the former convict in Victor Hugo's "Les Miserables," is taken into the good bishop's house, given his supper and a warm bed and made as welcome as though he were a prince. But the propensities of a life, hardened by contact with vicious men and embittered by the sense of unjust treatment, stifle the good spirit in the man, and before dawn he rises from his bed and carries off with him the bishop's plate which had adorned the table at supper. He is soon apprehended by the gendarmes and brought back to the episcopal residence, where the good bishop, recognizing the man's temptation and desiring to protect him, leaves the impression on the officers that he gave the plate to Jean Valjean, and asks why he did not take the silver candlesticks, which were also a present to him. The gendarmes on this release the man, and the bishop exclaims, "Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good. I have bought your soul of you. I withdraw it from black thoughts and the spirit of perdition, and give it to God." This was the undoubted purpose of Jesus with the fallen woman. By His compassionate treatment of her guilty soul He expected to prompt her to a life of purity. "Hath no man condemned thee? Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

Such a method is calculated to be effective in restoring men to virtue, by leading them to repentance and amendment, if there be any vestige of conscience in them. Do you wish to get the most out of men? Do not punish them, but pardon them; do not curse them, but bless them; do not exact the payment of an obligation from them, but put them under greater obligation.

William Scott was a soldier lad from a Vermont farm. He fell asleep at his post. He had great provocation, for he had been without any rest for forty-eight hours. The army was at Chain Bridge, the neighborhood was dangerous, and discipline must be kept. A court-martial sentenced the man to be shot. Then the kind offices of Abraham Lincoln were sought. The day preceding the proposed execution the great-hearted President appeared at the tent of William Scott, and asked

him many questions about himself, his family and his circumstances. Finally he said: "My boy, stand up here and look me in the face. You are not going to be shot to-morrow. I believe you when you tell me that you could not keep awake. I am going to trust you and send you back to your regiment. But I have been put to a good deal of trouble on your account. I have had to come up here from Washington, when I have a great deal to do; and what I want to know is, how are you going to pay my bill?" With his heart welling up in his throat, William Scott expressed his gratitude in the best terms his embarrassment would permit. He said that he had not thought the matter out, it had come upon him so suddenly, but there was his bounty in the savings bank, and some money he thought could be raised by mortgaging the farm at home. His own pay was something, and he believed the boys of his regiment would help him a little on pay-day. Altogether it seemed probable to him that five or six hundred dollars could be made up, if that would be sufficient. "But the bill is a great deal more than that," said Mr. Lincoln. Then the condemned man replied that, though he did not quite see his way clear to do it, he would—if he lived—find some plan for paying the great debt. Then the President put his hands on the shoulders of William Scott, and looked into his face and said: "My boy, my bill is a very large one. Your friends can not pay it, nor your bounty, nor the farm, nor all your comrades. There is only one man in all the world who can pay it, and his name is William Scott. If from this day William Scott does his duty, so that if I should be present when he came to die, he could look me in the face as he does now, and say, I have kept my promise, and I have done my duty as a soldier, then my debt will be paid. Will you make that promise, and try to keep it?" The promise was given, and it was kept nobly. In one of the fights in the Peninsula William Scott fell wounded to the death, and said to his comrades: "If any of you ever have the chance, I wish you would tell President Lincoln that I have never forgotten the kind words he said to me at

Chain Bridge, and now that I am dying, I want to thank him again because he gave me the chance to fall like a soldier in battle, and not like a coward by the hands of my comrades." Well could Secretary Stanton say of Lincoln as he gazed upon the face of the stricken President: "There lies the most perfect ruler of men who ever lived." Lincoln saved a life to the nation by his compassion, and that life was freely poured out for the nation when the opportunity for sacrifice presented itself.

That was Christ's way of redeeming the lost. He came not to judge, not to condemn, but to pity, to love, to forgive, to win the erring to righteousness. It is the way society must learn to employ in its treatment of the depraved and dangerous classes. No punishment must be considered adequate which is not remedial in its object. The meting out of vengeance, the protection of society, the appeal to fear as a deterrent—these have no sufficient justification until they are permeated with a divine purpose to recover the sinner and the criminal from his frightful ills. Love will teach us how this is to be done.

Leschetiszky, the famous teacher of Paderewski, will never be satisfied until a pupil has expressed all the sentiment, color, warmth, vigor, and fire of his nature in his execution. He will say: "Your fingers run over the keys and say nothing. They are like icicles. Fill them with love, with sympathy!" What blunderers we are in our attempts to redeem society from the ills which vex it, until our natures have been suffused with the love of Christ, and our work has been charged with His divine compassion!

## XVIII.

### THE WITNESS OF JESUS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

#### CHAPTER VIII. 12-59.

John's Gospel shows us how deep a sense Jesus had of being a stranger on the earth.—*Beyschlag*.

CONTINUATION of the discussions at the Feast of Tabernacles. (Chap. VII.) An interval of perhaps a few hours. The officers of the Sanhedrin having made their report, and Jesus having remained untouched, He now resumes His discourse, which takes more distinctly the form of a defense, and issues in His utter rejection by the hostile Jews. The cumulative progress of Jewish enmity is seen in the course of these discussions, beginning in Chapters V and VI, where Jesus proceeds almost without interruption. In Chapter VII He is more frequently challenged, and in Chapter VIII He is stoutly resisted and contradicted at every point. In this witness concerning Himself, Jesus pursues three lines of expression.

#### I. HE BEARS TESTIMONY TO HIS OWN CHARACTER (12-20).

- i. **The Light of the World (12).** Had already used one of the miracles of the Old Testament, the water from the rock in the desert, suggested perhaps by the libations in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles (vii, 37-39); now employs a second, the pillar of fire, suggested possibly by the candelabra of the Temple. Both are symbolical of Himself. The figure of light elsewhere used by John absolutely as an expression of God's essential being (1 John i, 5).

The light of the world is a larger conception of Christ's mission than even His disciples at first gained. Following Him, like following the pillar of fire, would bring illumination to the path of the pilgrim. Light of life signifies light that issues from and proceeds to life.

2. **The Testimony Repudiated (13).** It is personal, therefore unreliable, retort the Jews. Point not well taken. He knows Himself. Light proves its reality and character by shining. Christ attests Himself by His person and work. He is conscious of Himself.
3. **Rejection of this Testimony a Proof of Spiritual Dullness (14, 15).** They do not realize whence He came. Their judgment is wholly carnal, hence imperfect.
4. **Concurrence of the Father's Testimony (16-18).** A twofold witnessing should be satisfactory to any Jew who knows the law. Christ is one infallible witness, and the Father, who has testified in the Scriptures, in the voice from heaven and in the consciences of men, is another.
5. **Impossibility of Knowing the Father Without Knowing Christ (19).** The case is hopeless. They have no spiritual susceptibility qualifying them to understand Him. Yet He is not silenced, though He continues to teach within hearing of His foes, for the time of His supreme sacrifice has not yet appeared (20).

## II. HE EMPHASIZES THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS MISSION (21-30).

1. **Momentous Issues of His Earthly Life (21).** His sojourn is brief. He must soon leave them. Whither He goes they can not come, because they will not believe in Him. Their sin makes His mission to them fruitless.

2. **The Sneer of Unbelief (22).** The Jews affirm that if Jesus is going to destroy Himself, the only way of departure which in their judgment is not equally open to them, surely they can not follow Him, for suicide is the same as murder.
3. **Spiritual Distinctions (23).** The difference in character, habits, thought, sphere of living, in Jesus and these Jews made an infinite abyss between them. Nothing but transforming faith in Him will ever effect a harmony between them and Him, and this it is altogether unlikely they will ever experience (24).
4. **A Plainer Revelation at Present Impossible (25-27).** They have not spiritual discernment enough even to apprehend what has been given. The very questions they ask indicate this. When He speaks of the Father they utterly miss His meaning.
5. **The Fuller Revelation by His Death (28, 29).** When they have crucified the Lord, His glory will be more apparent, and they will perceive that He has been doing only the Father's will.
6. **Results of This Address (30).** Impressed with the words of Jesus, and convinced of the importance of His mission, some cast themselves upon Him, forsaking their own narrow views, and awaiting His further disclosures.

### III. HE EXPOSES THE INFIDELITY OF HIS CRITICS (31-59).

Jesus now applies a test to the faith of those Jews who yield assent to His claims, and proves its weakness.

1. **Their Slavery (31-36).** They profess to be free, having liberty as a birthright, but Jesus shows them that spiritually they are enslaved.
2. **Their Disloyalty (37-40).** They affirm that they are the true offspring of the father of the faithful, but Jesus says, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham."



3. **Their Iniquity (41-47).** Professing to be the children of God, they show themselves to be the children of the devil by their murderous intentions.
  4. **Their Ignorance (48-58).** Assuming that they are wise, they betray their lack of knowledge by protesting that Jesus dishonors Abraham in claiming power which He could not have.
  5. **Their Brutality (59).** Seeing now that Jesus presents Himself not only as the Messiah, but as Deity, and having no sufficient answer to His claims, they attempt to stone Him to death.
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### The Light of the World.

*"I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."*—JOHN viii, 12.

"The Lord God is a sun," cried the psalmist. No scientific knowledge of the magnitude and characteristics of the blazing central orb of our system such as we now possess aided the imagination of the poet. But the obvious wonders of the sun were enough to give him a figure for the Deity, the fitness of which had even been realized by the heathen. "God is light," wrote John, "and in him is no darkness at all." The mystery of the light had not been penetrated as deeply by the apostle as by modern investigators, but the beauty of the figure was clear to his mind. Travelers relate that people living in the frigid zone, as the end of the six months of night approaches, climb to the highest elevations that they may catch the earliest gleams of the returning sun, and shout with rapture as its first rays flash up out of the night. To all the denizens of the earth, seeking the joy of illumination, Jesus cries, "I am the light of the world."

No thoughtful person could meet these words for the first time in mature life without being profoundly moved by them. They express an egotism of such sublimity

that they arrest attention instantly, and provoke an intense interest in the man who uttered them. Jesus is defending Himself against the misrepresentations of His enemies, and He does so by opposing His own character to their willful unbelief. He virtually says to them, "My defense is Myself!" The Pharisees are offended at this, and they seek to discredit His testimony because it is so personal. "Thou bearest record of Thyself; Thy record is not true." But Jesus declares the objection cheap and groundless. "Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true; for I know whence I come and whither I go, but ye can not tell whence I come and whither I go." Jesus is aware of Himself. He is conscious of His own superlative worth. That kind of self-knowledge always characterizes the effective person.

William Pitt said in an hour when Englishmen were despondent over their national decline, "I am sure that I can save this country, and that nobody else can." That was at a time when Lord Chesterfield was moved to write, "We are no longer a nation." But no sooner had Pitt assumed control of the government than a happy change in the fortunes of England was observable. Frederick the Great said, "England has long been in labor, and at last she has brought forth a man." Qualified to inspire other men with the bravery that distinguished his own actions, Pitt became at once the master statesman of his age, and "for the next four years this imposing figure towers supreme in British history." Jesus said, "I can save this world, and no one else can. I am the light of the world." He appealed to the witness of the Father as given in the Scriptures, as pronounced by the voice from heaven, as expressed in His miracles, and as recorded in the consciences of men who listened to His words.

He might have appealed also to the history which would be made through His influence in the ages to come. Most distinctly does the record of the last nineteen centuries justify His self-assertiveness. Lord Bacon inserted this sentence in his last will and testament: "My name and memory I leave to foreign nations, and to

mine own countrymen after some years." Jesus could have safely rested His claims on the verdict of the future. He has amply proven Himself to be the light of the world.

If Jesus had asserted that He exclusively could throw light on every question which pertains to the life of the world, it would not have been so easy to vindicate Him. For while there is no department of human thought and activity which His mind does not illumine when brought into relation with it, yet He has offered no direct contribution to physical science, to art and music, and to the specific problems which are peculiar to modern society. He knew that men would meet these things in due time with the courage of those who relish labor, and would find joy in the process of their conquest. But into the darkness of the spiritual world, where lurk problems which no man can solve alone, He would throw the only light which can scatter the night of sin and selfishness. He is "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Other attempts there have been to illuminate the world, but they have served the rather to accentuate its darkness. Plato affords us the most impressive example, but of him the author of *Ecce Deus* has incisively written that he gives "one the idea that he undertook to do the work of a domestic gas-fitter. . . . He is so minute as to place a lamp at the corner of every street, at the entrance of every house, and in every room of every habitation. . . . Plato lighted his age with gas, Christ lighted the world with the sun; the one was local, the other universal; the one changeable, the other permanent. The heathen philosophers gave directions, Christ gave life."



Thomas Carlyle, commenting in his brusque fashion on Holman Hunt's painting of Christ as the Light of the World, a picture with which most persons are familiar through manifold prints, exclaims, "You call that thing, I ween, a picture of Jesus Christ. It is a poor mis-shaped presentation of the noblest, the brotherliest,

and the most heroic-minded Being that ever walked God's earth. Do you suppose that Jesus ever walked about bedizened in priestly robes and a crown, and with yon jewels on His breast, and a gilt aureole round His head? Ne'er crown nor pontifical robe did the world e'er give to such as He." Furthermore Jesus does not hold a lantern *before* the world. He shines *in* the world. Wherever He moves darkness vanishes. His glory consists in no outward circumstance, but in inward character. He can not receive honor from men, he can not refrain from bestowing light upon men. He is light in Himself. As the cloudy pillar which led the Israelites through the wilderness was not made luminous by some reflection, but burned with its own glowing fire, so Jesus pours forth His own self in tides of holy radiancy to illumine the world. And it is by entering into the life of Christ with loving sympathy and devout faith that we walk not in darkness, but have the light of life.

The only furnishings which Epictetus placed in his humble cottage were a cheap straw pallet on which he slept, and a simple lamp which served to cheer him at night, and which burned before the images of his household deities. It was constructed of iron, and was the nearest approach to luxury the poor philosopher had allowed himself. A thief stole it, and Epictetus quietly said, "He will be finely disappointed when he comes again, for he will only find an earthenware lamp next time." When he died the little earthenware lamp was bought by some hero-worshiper for three thousand drachmas. The satirist Lucian remarked upon this, "The purchaser hoped that if he read philosophy at night by that lamp, he would at once acquire in dreams the wisdom of the admirable old man who once possessed it."

With a similar fatuity sentimental persons fancy that by merely basking in the presence of Christ they can attain the holiest life. But the words of Jesus are explicit: "He that followeth Me . . . shall have the light of life." The meaning of "followeth" is not obscure. No one ever follows Christ who does not give himself up to the Lord of glory, who does not yield his will to the

will of the Master. No amount of study about Christ can ever compensate for actual fellowship with Christ.

The birds of the air instinctively follow the light of their life. Nearly all of them, as Michelet says, "live in the sun, fill themselves with it, or are inspired by it. Those of the south carry its reflected radiance on their wings; those of colder climates in their songs; many of them follow it from land to land." This is a parable of the spiritual life. The divine instincts of the soul prompt all who love the truth to seek perpetual communion with Christ.



"So late as the year 1842," says Alfred Russel Wallace, "the French mathematician and philosopher Comte declared that all study of the fixed stars was a waste of time, because their distance was so great that we could never learn anything about them." But that was before the application of spectrum analysis to the problems involved. With the use of the spectroscope the distant worlds have been brought into the very hands of the investigator. More than this, "it has been possible," as Carl Snyder says, "to detect, locate, map, measure, and even weigh vast objects that affect no human sense. Of all the triumphs of the scientific method, there is none more striking."

The philosophers of the world have often affirmed that God must forever remain unknown and unknowable, and that to search for Him would always be a bootless task. But with the coming of Jesus Christ among men the revelation of God has been focused to our earthly vision. "This, then, is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all," writes the apostle John. "I am the light of the world," announces Jesus. Those who behold Him with open eyes joyously assert the identification is complete. "Before Abraham was I am," says Jesus. "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made," writes John. Before the words, "Let there be light!" rang over

the primeval chaos, He who is Light had been shining from eternity. The smoking torches, the smoldering fires, the trembling luminaries that man has set in his sky will one day disappear in unfathomable night. But the Light of the World will flood the universe forever.

What wonders have been disclosed in the properties of that matter which is called radium, with its power to go on gleaming with a pale phosphorescent light, it would seem indefinitely. It has been estimated that a microscopic speck of this marvelous substance "is capable of sending out a stream of fiery particles for thirty thousand years." A radium electroscope has been invented which is calculated to continue automatically ringing a bell for that period of time. Under the microscope, within a cylinder from which all other light is excluded, the eye sees a miniature universe flashing with tiny stars, which pour forth their scintillations with unwearying rapidity. Yet no scientist is rash enough to contend that these points of light will not some time fade into invisibility.

But the Light of the World is absolutely inexhaustible. Calculations concerning His energy are beyond the range of thought. From everlasting to everlasting He is God. The development of processes for turning night into day has made a fascinating chapter in the history of civilization. Nor has the end of achievement in this direction yet been attained. The function of culture in enlightening society has been of high consequence, and the intellectual life of the world will reach still loftier summits through the ministry of education. But the moral and spiritual hope of humanity centers in Him who called Himself the "Light of the World."

Eternity will reveal no other source of illumination. John saw the celestial world in vision too wonderful for human words to describe, and too sublime for human thought to comprehend. Out of that apocalypse we read, "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it."



## XIX.

# HEALING OF THE MAN BORN BLIND.

## CHAPTER IX.

This is the unique, tender, genuine chief Gospel. . . . Should a tyrant succeed in destroying the Holy Scriptures, and only a single copy of the Epistle to the Romans and the Gospel according to John escape him, Christianity would be saved.—*Luther*.

THIS is one of the best examples of John's favorite method of exhibiting side by side the development of belief and unbelief. Here the Pharisees are represented as becoming more determined and malicious in their enmity to Jesus, while the blind man is seen steadily growing in confidence and clearness of faith until he openly confesses his trust in the Son of God. The chapter divides naturally into (1) the Sign, (2) the Inquisition, (3) the Issue.

### I. THE SIGN (1-12.)

- i. **Prelude to the Sign (1-5).** Descending the Temple steps, Jesus is confronted by the blind beggar. Problem suggested by the fact of his having been born blind. Is any one's sin involved in this misfortune? The same problem considered in the book of Job. Question as old as human suffering. The negative of Jesus. Calamity not a certain mark of sin. Great sinners often suffer least, great saints most. Surely no sin of this man could be responsible for his misfortune; he was born blind. The sin of parents visited upon their children—a fact of observation—will not account for this case, Jesus declares. "That

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the works of God should be made manifest in Him." Christ's opportunity. "The light of the world." A spiritual interpretation in anticipation of the sign.

2. **The Sign Given (6, 7).** Means used. A test of faith. The probable sensations of the man. Jesus selects a common remedy—both spittle and clay being regarded as helpful in such cases—and imparts a power not contained in either. "It is easier to believe when means can be perceived; it is still easier when the means seem to be appropriate." (*Plummer.*) The washing in Siloam brings sight.
3. **The Effect of the Sign (8-12).** Astonishment of the witnesses. Curiosity to know: (1) Is this actually the man born blind? (2) How was the wonder of his healing accomplished? (3) Where is the man who did it? Answers to these questions.

### II. THE INQUISITION (13-34).

Friends and neighbors bring the man to the Pharisees, not before the Sanhedrin, but probably to one of the lesser synagogue councils.

1. **The Man's First Examination (13-17).** The miracle had been wrought on the Sabbath day. Other Sabbath miracles: Withered hand (Matt. xii, 9), Demoniac at Capernaum (Mark i, 21), Simon's mother-in-law (Mark i, 29), Woman bowed down eighteen years (Luke xiii, 11), Man with dropsy (Luke xiv, 2), Paralytic at Bethesda (John v, 1-10). Three questions are put to the man: (1) How did you receive your sight? Man repeats the story briefly. (2) How could a Sabbath-breaker perform such a miracle? The man does not answer, and the inquisitors are divided among themselves by this question. (3) What sort of character do you say He is? "A prophet," is the ready answer.
2. **An Examination of the Parents (18-23).** Pharisees go back to the fact of the miracle which they profess not to believe occurred. Three questions are

put to them: (1) Is this your son? (2) Was he born blind? (3) How does he now see? The replies of the parents show timidity. They fear excommunication. Throw the inquiry back upon the son, whom they claim as their own, and who they assert was certainly born blind. "He is of age; ask him; he shall speak for himself." Distinguish forms of excommunication.

3. **The Man's Final Examination and Expulsion (24-34).** The Pharisees resort to a pious trick. Let God be praised, but let this man who breaks the Sabbath be condemned. The man's certainty of the miracle, despite his uncertainty of the miracle-worker's character. Request for another recital of the manner of the miracle. The man's ironical response. Perhaps his inquisitors are ready to be won over to discipleship by the repetition of the tale. Abuse substituted for argument. They revile the man. His sturdy defense and growing confidence in Jesus. The man's ultimatum, and the discomfiture of the Pharisees. An explosion of impotent wrath. The man's expulsion an illustration of the words of Jesus (Luke vi, 22).

### III. THE ISSUE (35-41).

1. **In the Case of the Man (35-38).** Spiritual sight. Jesus finds the expelled man, and asks if he is ready to believe on the Son of God. He answers that he is whenever he can discover Him. Jesus reveals Himself as the object of his quest, and the man pays Him divine honors. Thus, as to the outcast Samaritan woman, so to the expelled Jew, Jesus reveals Himself more clearly than He had yet done to His own disciples.
2. **In the Case of the Pharisees (39-41).** Spiritual blindness. The judgment of Christ's mission. The blind see, the seeing become blind. Those who know they are blind, and desire their sight, find it in Christ. Those who fancy they see, and reject the

help of the sight-giver, fall into blindness. Such pass sentence on themselves. Because they do see enough to bring them salvation, and refuse the light they have, sin remains with them. If they were actually ignorant they would not be held guilty.

### The Ground of Certitude.

*"One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."*—JOHN ix, 25.

It is recorded that a public speaker began an address with these words: "I call the attention of this audience to a subject very difficult of comprehension. I shall try to make it plain to you, but it will take considerable time and will require close attention on your part since I am not quite sure I entirely understand it myself." This was commendably frank, but it disqualified the man for any effective service with the people who heard him. The blind man in the story under our present review took his stand upon the facts of his experience, though he confessed his inability to explain them. When pushed to solve the mystery of his wondrous restoration he refused to meet the demand. He clung to the simple transaction which had brought him out of darkness into light, and said, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

Justin Martyr was thrown into prison for his bold proclamation of faith in Christ. When the Stoic minister of the Emperor Aurelius jocosely asked him, "Do you imagine that after your head is cut off you will go straight to heaven?" Justin replied, "Imagine it? I know it." The ground of this confidence was the consciousness of spiritual fellowship with Christ. When Ignatius of Antioch was brought before the emperor Trajan for the crime of being a Christian, he gave his name as Theophorus. "And who is Theophorus?" asked the monarch. "He who carries Christ in his heart," was the reply. "Do you speak of him who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?" asked Trajan. "I speak of Him who

bore my sins on the cross," said Ignatius. "Do you then bear the crucified within yourself?" he was asked. "I do," said he, "for it is written, 'I will dwell in them.'" This is what Chalmers used to call the portable evidence of Christianity. It rests on as good philosophic basis as any other testimony of the consciousness. Said Emanuel Kant, "My belief in God and in another world is so interwoven with my moral nature, that I am under as little apprehension of having the former torn from me as of losing the latter." When Samuel Johnson was discussing the doctrine of necessity with Boswell one day, he said, "Sir, we know that our will is free, and there's an end on 't." John says, "He that believeth on the Son of God has the witness in himself." There is no better proof of Christianity than this. It is the spiritual counterpart of the blind man's physical experience, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."



Very much of our knowledge we are compelled to take at second hand, and we never dream of protesting that this is an unreasonable requirement. You have never worked out a table of logarithms. The mathematicians have done that for you, and if you have knowledge enough to use the results of their labor, you do so without calling in question their accuracy. You have never ascertained the specific gravity of all the substances in the world. The physicists have done that for you, and you take their work on trust and are grateful for it. You have not visited the coral islands of the Southern seas, but others have, and you accept their descriptions as reliable. In the same way it is your custom to receive information about exploration, history, science, and current life, and to credit it without scruple. You call it knowledge with as much assurance, as though you were the one and only person who had secured precise results on these subjects from personal investigation.

The spiritual life described by Christianity, however, is a matter of personal experience, and not of academic

instruction. It is true that a predisposition in its favor is created by the traditions of your ancestry, and the testimony of your associates. The teachings of the Bible also re-enforce the instincts of your soul. But you are never sure in religion until all that you have been taught has been confirmed by personal investigation, not alone through processes of reason, though these are valuable, but also through the processes of the heart, which are reasonable in their character. You do not argue yourself into the love of anybody or anything. The object of your affection simply fills the whole orb of your vision, and that is quite sufficient. You do not reason yourself into faith in Jesus Christ. But having launched your soul upon the sea of His love, you come to know Him, whom to know aright is life eternal. The method becomes reasonable as soon as it has resulted in the knowledge of God through Christ.

It is difficult to determine who enjoys a musical composition the more—the educated musician who sees the scientific relation of every concord, the mathematical law of every movement; or the common man without technical knowledge, who has a passion for melody, and who simply opens his soul to the divine flood of sound, and lets his entire being be deluged with rapture. It is equally uncertain who has the deeper realization of the joys of religion: the man who has carefully analyzed doctrinal systems, and has finally attached himself to Jesus Christ because the necessities of his reason have required him to do so; or that man who out of his passion for righteousness has simply turned his soul toward the divine Spirit and has been overswept by tides of religious feeling. Each is satisfied, and each is convinced, and that is enough. "I don't know how it was done," said the blind man to his tormentors. "But one thing I do know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."



The blind man in this story expresses his certitude in four assertions. First certainty: "I am the man." When the miracle had been wrought upon him, and the neigh-



bors had asked one another, "Is not this he that sat and begged?" and some had replied, "This is he," while others had said, "He is like him," he set the whole inquiry at rest by exclaiming, "I am he." If a man can not be sure of his identity, he can not be certain of anything. His parents were ready to swear that he was the son who had been born blind. Further than that they would not go. "He is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself." They appealed to the court of last resort.

Second certainty: "I have my sight. I am the same man changed." If a man does not recognize his own state of consciousness, he does not know anything. Hot or cold, sick or well, weak or strong, happy or miserable, every man must know himself to be, if he knows anything.

Third certainty: "He who did this is divine. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, He could do nothing." That is a legitimate inference from the facts in hand.

Fourth certainty: "He is the Son of God." Cast out by the Pharisees, Jesus finds him, and says, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He answers, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" Jesus declares, "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." And the man exclaims, "Lord, I believe." That was a proper result from all that had preceded.

Surely these convictions are possibilities in the experience of every man who is made the object of Christ's transforming grace. "I am the man," "I am that man changed," "He who wrought the change is divine," "I acknowledge Him as my Lord."



The starting point of all religious experience is conscience, that faculty in man's nature which determines moral values, which erects a standard of righteousness and inexorably demands that conduct shall measure up to it, which enables a man to know without laws on the

statute books that theft and arson and murder are inherently wrong, no matter who may say they are right, and that they are not made any more wicked by the fact that they are under the ban of the law. Conscience stands censor over the inmost self, and no man disregards it without suffering penalties of which he is aware.

But what gives conscience its terrible authority over the soul? The conviction that back of this moral standard, which the soul can not escape, is a divine Person who is responsible for its existence. As John Henry Newman says, "If, as is the case, we feel responsibility, are ashamed, are frightened, at transgressing the voice of conscience, this implies that there is One to whom we are responsible, before whom we are ashamed, whose claims upon us we fear."

Convinced of the existence of God, and of His eternal righteousness, a man brings his mind to the story of the Son of man as recorded in the New Testament. He may not be greatly impressed by the supernatural elements in that narrative, but he will be profoundly moved by the manifestation of goodness in the character of its hero. Gradually the effect of his study will be an intense admiration for this pure and holy person. At length a sudden conviction will seize his soul that He who exhibits such perfections can be no less than God manifest in the flesh.

Now everything else follows of necessity. You say that Jesus came into the world by a miraculous birth. What is your evidence? Evidence? The wonder is that He came at all. But having come, the *manner* of His advent can not be too marvelous to be incredible. You say that He wrought miracles. Where is your evidence? Evidence? The surprising thing is that, being what He was He could confine Himself, with such amazing self-restraint, to so few exhibitions of supernatural power. You say that He rose from the dead. What is your evidence? Evidence? The marvelous thing is that He should die at all, but having died, it was inevitable that He should rise from the tomb. How could death hold *Him*? You say that He ascended to Heaven. Where is

your evidence? Evidence? The wonder is that He could remain on the earth so long. One would suppose that the gravitation of His character would send Him aloft the moment His foot had touched this planet. There are no incredibilities in the story of Deity.

Convinced that Christ is God, a man trusts himself to the Lord of life and finds his character transformed by the renewing of his grace. He says, "I am the *same* man, but I am a *changed* man. Whereas I was blind, now I see." Can there be any better evidence than this of the truth of religion?

Mr. Ruskin in a letter to his father relates his experience in the following way: "I resolved that I would believe in Christ and take Him for my Master in whatever I did; that assuredly to disbelieve the Bible was quite as difficult as to believe it; that there were mysteries either way; and that the best mystery was that which gave Christ for a Master. And when I had done this . . . I felt a peace and spirit in me I had never known before, at least to the same extent; and everything has seemed to go right with me ever since, all discouragements and difficulties vanishing, even in the smallest things."

## XX.

### THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

#### CHAPTER X. 1-21.

We may presume then to say that the Gospels are the first fruits of all the Scriptures, and the first fruits of the Gospels is that of John, into whose meaning no man can enter unless he has reclined upon the bosom of Jesus.

—*Origen.*

#### Introduction.

JESUS has previously used the Brazen Serpent (iii, 14), the Manna (vi, 50), the Rock (vii, 37), and the Pillar of Fire (viii, 12) as symbols of Himself. He now employs the figures of the Shepherd and the Door for the same purpose. These He works out more elaborately into allegories, and together with the Vine (xv, 1-8) they constitute the only examples of their kind in the Gospels, and they are confined to this book. They seem to occupy in this Gospel a place similar to that filled by the parables in the other Gospels. The latter, however, usually illustrate the operations of the kingdom of God, rather than the relations of individual believers to Christ. The simile of the Good Shepherd is indicated in the other Gospels as follows: in the parable of the Lost Sheep (Matt. xviii, 12, 13; Luke xv, 4-7), and in such passages as Matt. ix, 36; xi, 28, 29; xv, 24.

There is an evident relation between this allegory and the case of the blind man recorded in the preceding chapter. The treatment accorded him by the Pharisees, as contrasted with the attitude of Jesus, shows clearly the difference between false teachers and the one true Teacher.

The allegory is presented in a somewhat mixed form.

The conception of the Door is thrown into view at the very beginning, but is not treated specifically until after the general characteristics of the Shepherd have been considered. Even in the allegory of the Door there is an anticipation of the fuller interpretation of the allegory of the Shepherd. Hence there is a mingling of pictures here. While the Door and the Shepherd are two distinct figures, yet Jesus appropriates them both to Himself. Logic is sacrificed for the sake of essential truth. In both types He announces Himself as the supreme authority in spiritual matters. "In relation to the fold Christ is the door; in relation to the flock He is the good shepherd." (*Westcott.*)

### I. THE SHEPHERD (1-6).

The teaching here is somewhat general. The marks of distinction between the shepherd and the robber are sharply drawn before the application of the allegory to Jesus is made. The shepherd is known: (1) By the fact that he uses the one proper entrance (1, 2). The use of any other method indicates plunder and not protection. Oriental sheep-folds are open at the top, and are simply surrounded by walls or palisades. A single door gives entrance to both sheep and shepherd. The brigand and petty sheep-stealer will approach from some other quarter if not discovered. The fold is the Church universal. The sheep are believers. The shepherds are their spiritual leaders, who use the one door. (2) By the fact that the porter opens to him is the shepherd known (3). There are many flocks in the one fold. Hence there are many shepherds. The porter will give admittance to those whom he recognizes as shepherds. The figure of the porter is indeterminate. It is not to be explained precisely of the Father, the Holy Spirit, Moses, John the Baptist, or any single agency, but rather generally of any or all means by which men are brought to Christ. It is wiser not to press any point too far in the interpretation of the allegory, but to confine the mind to essentials. (3) The shepherd is also distinguished by the fact that he is recognized by the sheep (3-5). He

calleth them by name. They hear his voice, and follow him. A stranger they will not follow, but will flee from his voice. (4) The shepherd is recognized by his manner with the sheep. He exercises peculiar care over them. He leadeth them forth. He putteth them out to find pasture. He goeth before them (3, 4). In all these characterizations Jesus points to the false teachers. From this point Jesus takes up the interpretation.

## II. THE DOOR (7-10).

As this is the first item in the picture, it is first considered. The relation of the shepherd to the flock is dropped for the moment, and the office of the door is taken up. "I am the door," in contrast with others who made false conditions of entrance. The reason for their conduct is seen in their motive. They are plunderers, not saviors. "All . . . before me" refers to the murderous teachers, seeking to steal, kill, and destroy, who now had their representatives all about Him, and who were the curse of the nation. They had hearers, but not<sup>1</sup> sheep. The door provides opportunity for freedom. They who use it come in for shelter, go out for pasture, and find perpetual salvation. For Christ gives life in abundance. Verse 10 marks the transition to the picture of the Good Shepherd.

## III. THE GOOD SHEPHERD (11-18).

1. **Parallel Uses of the Type.** In the Old Testament the figure is used to illustrate the relation of Jehovah to His people, and in a subordinate sense of true teachers and guides of Israel, as in the New Testament it symbolizes the relation of Christ and His apostles to the Church. Compare *Psa.* xxiii; *Isa.* xi, 11; *Jer.* xxiii; *Ezek.* xxxiv; xxxvii, 24; *Zech.* xi, 7; *Psa.* lxxx, 1. Christ thus identifies Himself with the Shepherd-God. The influence of the figure on music, art, poetry, and devotional literature generally is very wide and persistent.



2. **Christ Fulfills the Type.** The word rendered "good" is more precisely "beautiful;" but with the Greeks the word "beauty" is significant of "goodness," which is the highest moral beauty. The beautiful features of the Good Shepherd are, (1) that He seeks the welfare of the sheep and risks His life for their protection (11), in this respect differing from the hireling (12, 13); (2) that there is a mutual understanding between the sheep and the Shepherd (14, 15); and (3) that the Good Shepherd is universal Lord, having souls everywhere which are bound to Him by an eternal interest (16). For all His sheep He lays down His life.
3. **Christ Glorifies the Type.** He voluntarily gives Himself to this beautiful office. The Father loves Him for His sacrifice. From the Father He has received authority to perform this devotion. It carries with it the power of resurrection (17, 18).

#### CONCLUSION (19-21).

As on former occasions, so now there was a division of the Jews because of this teaching. Again, as heretofore, Jesus was charged with having a demon. The people were urged to place no dependence upon His words. But some retorted that His words were not those of a demented person, and insisted that a man possessed of an evil spirit could not have healed the blind man. Here belief and unbelief are strongly contrasted after John's customary method.

### Salvation Through Sympathy.

*I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and my own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.*

—JOHN X, 14, 15. Revised Version.

When the old German emperor William, at ninety-one years of age, lay on his bed calmly awaiting the end of life, his wife and family and ministers of state being around him, the court preacher offered prayer and read the familiar words of the Twenty-third Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," and so following. The dying Kaiser listened attentively, and said, "That is wonderful!" Then he fell into a slumber from which he did not wake. The gracious Shepherd had led him to green pastures and beside still waters.

Did Jesus, who was thoroughly acquainted with the Old Testament, have the Twenty-third Psalm in His mind when He employed this beautiful symbolism? He was born at Bethlehem, near the spot where David probably composed this lovely lyric. He would often see the shepherd and his flock, would observe the close relation between them, and would quickly perceive the fitness of the shepherd type to his own mission. He commissioned the restored Peter with the words, "Feed My sheep," a charge descriptive of the highest functions of the pastor. The bishop's crozier is the shepherd's crook. Peter never forgot the figure. To his fellows he said, "Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." To the elders he wrote, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Church dignitaries have often been admonished to feed, not fleece, the flock. Temporal rulers have been designated shepherds. The meaning of the figure is not ob-

scure. Twentieth century civilization, though largely segregated in cities, is not so far away from pastoral life that the symbolism of the good shepherd requires a key. The need of the shepherd's care is experienced everywhere.



The Good Shepherd is distinguished by His devotion to the sheep. "He leadeth them out." "He putteth forth His own sheep." "He giveth His life for the sheep." In the morning he appears at the sheep-fold, and calls them out to green pastures, using gentle compulsion with the reluctant. At noon-tide He leads them to the shade and the refreshing waters. At night-fall He conveys them safely home. His life is one of perfect consecration. He places Himself utterly at their service. David proudly told Saul how he rescued the lamb from the bear and the lion. It was characteristic of the shepherd's business. If the flock escaped the wild beasts, the thief and the robber were to be reckoned with.

Says Thomson in *The Land and the Book*: "A poor faithful fellow last spring, between Tiberias and Tabor, instead of fleeing actually fought three Bedouin robbers until he was hacked to pieces with their knives, and died among the sheep he was defending." Christ is the supreme exemplar of this spirit, "who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity." It is His whole life which is surrendered to our interest. Human experience is a conflict on a sinking ground. The moral philosopher ridicules us because we have not chosen wise counsels in making our contest. The apostles of culture promise to help us when we have helped ourselves. Christ puts Himself at our service, and awards us the security and success which He has won by His eternal sacrifice.

King Leopold of Belgium affects to take the people of the Congo to his heart, but actually plunders them for personal gain. His treachery is typical of the hireling, his cruelty is that of the bandit. Of Christ it is said, "When He saw the multitudes, He was moved

with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."



The Good Shepherd knows His sheep. "He calleth His own sheep by name." There are sheep which do not belong to Him. These he does not know. Christ said that at the judgment He would declare to the vain pretenders, "I never knew you." He does not mean that He has no consciousness of their existence, but no knowledge of them based on spiritual fellowship. "He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man." Paul says, "If any man love God, the same is known of Him." Christ is fully aware of His own.

Themistocles boasted that he could recite the names of all the citizens of Athens, and there were twenty thousand of them. The Good Shepherd has millions of sheep distributed through many folds, but He addresses every one of them by name. To be called *His* by Him is very sweet and inspiring.

Once when Julius Cæsar was attempting to carry war into Africa he was delayed by a mutiny of his veterans in Southern Italy. He gave them immediate discharge, addressing them as "citizens." Then their affection revived, and they begged with tears that they might be restored to his favor, and be honored again with the title of "Cæsar's soldiers." After some delay their request was granted. To be Christ's own is the dearest relation on earth or in heaven.

He knows His sheep when they scarcely know themselves, and when they are not recognized as His by others. "The world knoweth us not, because it knew not Him." But He knows us. He has brought us up from the hour we entered His fold. He has watched us with affectionate interest every moment since. We have wandered away from Him so often, and have soiled ourselves so much in the mire of sin, and have been torn so sadly by enemies, that we are sometimes doubtful where

we belong or to whom. But He knows us, and calls us by name.



The sheep know the Good Shepherd. "They know His voice. And a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers." There is a subtle law of correspondence in souls that are kin, a kind of intellectual and spiritual affinity. The minister truly speaks to *his hearers*, and to no others. The steel filings leap to kiss the magnet. The strings of the instrument throb to the touch of their own tones. William Jay quaintly said, "Christ's sheep are marked in the ear and foot; they hear His voice and follow Him." There are thousands of mortals who are only removed from the brute creation by the fact that they have possibilities of moral and spiritual life. Eating and drinking, sin and sensuality, pomp and pleasure make up their whole round of being. The Shepherd's voice seems never to penetrate the heavy folds which encase their consciences. Their deplorable state fills devout souls with agony. But if Christ does not approve Himself to these unfortunates as the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely, He has no method of reaching them. It is a profound mystery, but its truth is only too appallingly obvious. But the genuine disciple hears His voice, and knows His master. "I know mine own, and mine own know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father." Says the prophet Isaiah, "He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught." There is perfect correspondence between the Shepherd and the sheep; there is mutual understanding. The result is eternal life—the gift of the Shepherd. The sheep can not earn it by following, yet they can not have it without following. So long as they hear the Shepherd's voice, and follow Him, and refrain themselves from strangers, He will never relinquish His right to them. He will fight off the wolves with His own body. He will die a thousand deaths in their defense. He will defy all hell to pluck them out

of His hand. But they are free, and with suicidal folly they can slip away from Him. A little lamb the Shepherd will fold to His bosom, a wounded sheep He will carry on His shoulder, a frightened sheep He will encourage with His staff, a lost sheep He will follow to the bleak mountain. But a silly, refractory sheep that willfully flings itself into the ravine even the omnipotent Shepherd can not save from death. He said to the foolish, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."



## XXI.

### DISCOURSE AT THE FEAST OF DEDICATION.

#### CHAPTER X. 22-42.

Since Irenæus it has remained for the sons of the apostolic spirit the crown of the apostolic Gospels.—*Lange*.

#### Introduction (22-24).

APPARENTLY about two month elapsed between the discourse recorded in the preceding passage and that now under consideration. This is the interval between the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Dedication. The latter celebration occurred late in December, and commemorated the purification of the Temple after the profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes. It was instituted by the Maccabees. It continued eight days, and was also known as the Feast of Lights because of the illuminations which accompanied it.

As the mention of winter is not needed in this place for Jewish readers, who would know the season in which the Feast occurred, it may have been introduced for the sake of the Gentile readers, or for the purpose of showing that the inclemency of the weather drove Jesus to take shelter in the cloisters of Solomon's porch—a fine mark of John's attention to details. It has also been suggested that this sentence is symbolical of the tempest of hatred which surrounded Jesus while He was teaching. As the Master was walking about in this colonnade, the Jews, perhaps watching for a favorable opportunity when they could put themselves between Christ and His disciples, crowded about Him, and pressed upon Him persistent inquiries touching His claims. There are two natural divisions of the discourse which ensues, the first

being introduced with a question, the second with a charge of blasphemy; the former dealing with the Messiahship of Jesus, the latter with the Divinity of Jesus.

### I. THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS (24-30).

The Jews profess to be greatly exercised over His mission. "How long dost Thou cause us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." Three motives may have mingled in this request: some of the questioners may have been simply curious, some may have been sincerely hesitating between belief and unbelief, and some may have wished to extort an answer from Jesus on which they could base an accusation.

1. **For Unbelief No Direct Answer (25, 26).** Candid as the question seemed, a straight affirmation of His Messiahship would not have convinced men who had rejected testimony already given. His words repeatedly delivered were a sufficient answer. Even if these were inadequate, His works were a confirmation and interpretation of them. By these the Father was testifying in His behalf; but this witness they had rejected, because they were not of His fold.
2. **For Belief High Privilege (27-29).** Between Himself and His sheep there is mutual recognition and mutual confidence. They receive at His hands eternal life. They are imperishable if they abide with Him. They can not be taken away from Him without their own consent. Being free, they can choose to leave Him. Otherwise, they are secure forever. "My Father which gave them to Me is greater than all." Out of His hand they can not be plucked. Another reading is: "That which the Father has given Me is greater than all," that is, the faithful in their combined unity are stronger than their foes. In any case loyal believers are safe eternally.

3. **Oneness with the Father (30).** "I and My Father are one." This is more than an answer to their question. The hand of the Father from which the faithful can not be taken is the hand of the Christ, the man before them. This oneness is not merely oneness of purpose, work, or power, but oneness of essence. The whole mystery of the Incarnation lies in this brief sentence.

## II. THE DIVINITY OF JESUS (31-38).

1. **The Charge of Blasphemy (31-33).** The Jews taking up stones to assault Jesus plainly declared that they saw in His final answer not only a claim to the Messiahship, but an assertion of His divinity. When Jesus protests with fine irony that He does not understand which of the good works He has wrought has called forth vengeance, they tell Him that His making Himself equal with God is the occasion of their attack. The fact that Jesus does not correct them is evidence that they had not misapprehended His meaning.
2. **Reply to the Charge (34-38).** A reference to the use of the word "gods" in the Old Testament opens a formal argument by Christ (Psa. lxxxii, 6). If unjust rulers, on the principle that they are the representatives of divine authority, can be called "gods" without causing offense, shall not He whom the Father has sacredly set apart and sent into the world be permitted to call Himself "Son of God?"

Jesus now replies to their charge by an appeal to His works. If these are not divine, then they are justified in rejecting Him; but if they are unmis-  
takably God's works, then they ought at least to give belief to the works, and so acknowledge His unity with the Father, without whom they could not be wrought.

## CONCLUSION (39-42).

The rage of Christ's enemies is impotent. He escapes out of their hands, though they seek to apprehend Him.

He withdraws beyond the Jordan to the place where John first baptized. Thither people in great numbers follow Him, and give uniform testimony to Him. All that John witnessed concerning Him they have found to be true. "Many believed on Him there" with a faith which meant devotion to Him, not mere belief in His statements.

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### An Explanation of God.

*"I and My Father are one."*—JOHN, x, 30.

There is a famous political cartoon by Honoré Daumier, the French artist, which depicts a convicted prisoner, bound, gagged, and held between two men, to whom a mocking judge is represented as saying: "You may speak; explain yourself; you are free." But despite the prisoner's efforts to reply, he is about to be consigned to the executioner who is rolling up his sleeves for his grewsome task. Similarly Jesus is besought by the Jews to explain Himself. "How long dost thou make us to doubt?" they ask. "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." It is the meanest hypocrisy. He has already sufficiently revealed Himself. When He attempts to speak they take up stones to kill Him. The climax of their irritation is reached when He says, "I and My Father are one."

The Jews interpreted these words to mean that Jesus claimed to be divine. Jesus permitted this interpretation to stand without denial. Hence we must accept this interpretation or regard Him as impostor.

During the "Reign of Terror" in France, Lavoisier fell by the guillotine as a recompense for his patriotism. "The Republic has no need of savants," remarked the functionary who signed the death-warrant of the most famous chemist of the century. Jesus was crucified for His adherence to the claim that He was one with God. The rulers of the Jews had no room in the world for a divine Savior. They affected to think His words were blasphemous. Doubtless they were correct on the assumption that Jesus was but a man. Their insisting that

He be punished with death was in consonance with the severe traditions of the past. In our milder time a man who made such pretensions would be adjudged insane, and at the most would be confined for the protection of society.

The folly and wickedness of human beings demanding divine honors have always been realized by mankind, even when it has been the vogue to apotheosize heroes. A prætor affirmed that he had seen the soul of Augustus Cæsar ascend from its ashes to the celestial abodes. One observes how little value was attached to such an elevation by those most concerned, when he remembers that Vespasian exclaimed in the moment of death, "Woe is me! I am about to become a god." The flippant view of Deity under the pagan conception relieves the assumption of divine dignity of its otherwise impious quality. But in the Hebrew thought of God's ineffable grandeur, to aspire for the honors of Deity was nothing short of unpardonable profanity. Christ's claim was the superlative degree of infamy if it was not grounded in eternal reality. The punishment visited upon Herod Agrippa would seem to be justified on the supposition that he understood the wickedness of his pride. "And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, 'It is the voice of a god, and not a man.' And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

The obvious character of Christ makes it a moral impossibility that He should have misrepresented Himself. The sinless One told the truth about Himself. He was one with God not merely in power, authority, and purpose, but in essential being. The metaphysical difficulties of this doctrine may be insurmountable for some minds. But it is wise to accept the truth as one of revelation and not of speculation, and to give the soul the comfort of taking Christ as the perfect interpretation of God.

The implications of the fact that Christ is one with the Father are exceedingly helpful to the faith of the Christian. Not the least of these is the bringing of God into personal reality. Otherwise He is very hazy to many minds. Even by those who profess themselves to be true theists God is often only a convenient fiction to account for the existence of things. Some who would spurn the charge of being agnostics apparently go little beyond those unbelievers, and content themselves with thinking of God as the Infinite Energy, whence all the phenomena of the universe take their origin. That infinite energy operates in a variety of forces, to which names are given, for purposes of distinction, but which science is teaching may probably all be resolved into a single force. That infinite energy is manifested in a diversity of material substances, which also have their separate designations, but which science is teaching may all be reduced to one primordial stuff, the variety of elements being secured simply by differences of atomic arrangement. That infinite energy is active in many kinds of living organisms, from bacteria to mammoths, but science is teaching that these may all spring from a single vital essence, which is responsible for all the diversities of what we call life. It is the power which moves the wings of the bird, the wheels of the engine, the sword of the warrior, the cry of the child, the dream of the poet. If a sufficiently intelligent being had stood on the shoreless sea of primeval matter, he could have detected in that heated ocean of vapor all worlds, all histories, all souls, all effects of human thought and activity. That infinite energy is everywhere immanent in the universe; in the opening buds of the spring-tide, in the prayers of the penitents, in the ambitions of the conqueror, in the billows of the sea. This is God to many persons who fancy they actually believe in Him. But what a dismal state they suffer, who have no other god than this! As Fitchett has said, "Who can love gravitation; or pray to electricity; or sing hymns, say, to the law of the conservation of energy? All the great offices and forces of religion perish at a breath if there be no personal God."



It is in Christ, however, that the personal God comes out into clear vision. "I and the Father are one." God is a father, and no conception of fatherhood is possible without personality. God is Christ, and Christ exists in terms of being like our own. The little child, when directed to the throne of grace, instinctively prays to Jesus, and finds in Him the concrete notion of God which satisfies a mind untrammelled by metaphysical speculation. The philosophy of a mature mind can discover no better method of realizing God.



If Christ and God are one, then there can be no question that God is good. Without this revelation God is under suspicion in many hearts. Surely Nature does not uniformly and indubitably demonstrate the benevolence of God. The disasters which overwhelm great cities from the disturbances of the earth, the relentless sway of forces, which when ignorantly opposed by man hurl him to ruin, the ten thousand calamities which make life terrible by their mere possibility, raise doubts whether there be a personal God who controls the destinies of the race, and if there be, whether He is benevolent or malevolent. Certainly history does not invariably and conclusively prove the goodness of God. The hideous nightmare of war and plunder and murder, out of which nations have been wrought into being, with all their attendant destruction of human life and character, make a poor defense of God, when His character is under scrutiny. Certainly individual human experience does not infallibly point to the goodness of God. The saints go to the stake, and the sinners to the throne. The upright are assailed for their piety and the wicked are applauded for their iniquities. These are not uniform experiences, it is true, but they occur frequently enough to make the despondent victim of earthly cruelty pause and ask, with some of old, "What is the Almighty that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have if we pray to Him?" But despite all these perturbations of one's faith, if we can see that Christ and God are one, then we can

be sure that, whatever the facts in life may appear to say against the character of God, He must be benevolent. Christ has shown Himself to be love personified. If He and God are one, it is simply because we do not understand the providence of God that we hesitate to ascribe unvarying goodness to the Eternal. In due time we shall perceive and be satisfied. Meanwhile the soul fastens its gaze upon the Christ, who is one with the Father, and says triumphantly:

“Yet in the maddening maze of things,  
And tossed by storm and flood,  
To one fixed trust my spirit clings,  
I know that God is good.”



Jesus has just been explaining that it is His supreme purpose to obtain the salvation of those who will trust Him. He has called Himself the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep. He has just asserted that those who hear His voice and follow Him will be eternally secure. “I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My Father’s hand.” Here, then, is God’s great aim—the salvation of mankind. And all the occurrences of life, all the events of time, under His administration are to be bent to this end. Christ’s motive is God’s motive, and the intent must interpret every action. Does God require the praise of men? It is not for the purpose of gratifying His desire for adulation. What a cheap notion of Deity that would be! Does He ask for service? It is not for the sake of getting things done that could not otherwise be accomplished, nor to have the satisfaction of wielding a taskmaster’s whip. What a puerile conception of God! Does He exact sacrifice? It is not because He would be propitiated by the crushing of human ambitions. It is not that He sates His anger with blood-drenched altars. What an unholy thought of God! But by praise, by service, by sacrifice He is forever drawing men into higher nobility of character, into deeper sym-

pathy with Himself, and therefore into fuller realization of their native dignity as the sons of God.

There is a story of an English army surgeon who, wounded unto death on the battle-field, but distressed by the agonizing cries of the dying soldiers about Him, edged himself along from man to man with incredible difficulty and pain, that he might impart relief to the despairing, with his hypodermic needle administering an anæsthetic, where it could lessen misery, himself dying in the very act of helping others to ease of body. Was not that beautiful? Was it not divine? It was service and it was sacrifice; it was gratuitous and yet it was under compulsion, the necessity of love. Did it not magnify the man? It is thus that the demands of God are intended to make the souls of men more glorious. Christ enables us to see that this is God's controlling policy with a lost world. He and the Father are one.



When Napoleon and his army were scouring the Alps, an avalanche swept across the ranks with thunderous force, and carried into the abyss below a little drummer boy. He was not seriously injured, but he was beyond the reach of his comrades, unless some extraordinary effort was made to rescue him. He scrambled to the top of a snow mound, and waved his hand aloft in token that he had not perished. Above him hundreds of feet away marched the great army, with never an effort to reach him, though there were many that might have stretched forth a hand to deliver him. Then the boy began to beat the military calls to which he had been trained. In that clear atmosphere each sound was heard with terrible and pathetic distinctness. Could nothing be done to rescue him? Bonaparte was told of the boy's fate, but spoke no word. What was one little drummer boy to Italy in the mind of him who called the people food for powder. The cold crept over the lad, and he quickened his efforts. But the army passed on. Melting away over the ridges he watched his comrades file on file as they vanished from his sight. Then, fearless

still, though abandoned to die, the boy suddenly changed his note. No longer the tattoo, the advance, the charge, but after a moment's delay the funeral march. That sound was the last that came from the brave drummer lad, who lies yet in the snowy winding sheet of the Alps.

Not one soul, but a world full of souls, does Christ see in a deeper and more perilous abyss than mountain heights inclose. It is the passion of His being to rescue the perishing. He has lavished Himself upon the undertaking. All that His infinite resources carry He has devoted to this supreme purpose. "Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity." That is the immeasurable fact which interprets God to humanity, for Christ and the Father are one.

## XXII.

# THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

## CHAPTER XI.

From every house the neighbors met,  
The streets were filled with joyful sound,  
A solemn gladness even crowned  
The purple brows of Olivet.—*Tennyson.*

### Introduction.

"THE miracle of miracles in the history of the Christ," says Edersheim. It is surpassed only by our Lord's own resurrection, which was to a glorified life. Godet relates that Spinoza, the great pantheistic philosopher, declared to his friends, "that if he could have persuaded himself of the resurrection of Lazarus he would have dashed in pieces his own system and embraced without repugnance the common faith of Christians."

The significance of the miracle has provoked much assault upon its credibility. But from the standpoint of divine power there is no miracle which is more difficult of performance than another. Some miracles appear more wonderful to human vision than others, but to the Omnipotent all works are equal. Unless we take the position of certain critics that any miracle is impossible, and that therefore the record of every miracle must be accounted for on other than historic grounds, there is no reason for doubting the authenticity of this story. Westcott says, "Those who deny the fact are sooner or later brought to maintain either that the scene was an imposture, or that the record is a fiction. Both of these hypotheses involve a moral miracle."

It is sometimes objected that this miracle is not nar-

rated in the Synoptics, and that this fact weighs against the integrity of the story. It must be remembered, however, that these writers confine themselves almost exclusively to the ministry of Christ in Galilee, while John deals chiefly with events in the Judean ministry. It is no more remarkable that they should omit this narrative than that John should omit the record of other raisings from the dead which they preserve.

The dramatic importance of this miracle in John's composition is that it furnishes the culminating point in the plot to destroy the life of Jesus. In the ten chapters which precede he has described how Jesus revealed Himself in every kind of manifestation which was calculated to inspire faith, only to be met by increasing unbelief and deepening hostility on the part of the Jewish rulers. Now he shows that the raising of Lazarus, the supreme revelation of the divine glory in Christ's public ministry, determined His enemies to consummate their horrid purpose.

### I. THE OCCASION OF THE MIRACLE (1-16).

Sickness in the loved home at Bethany, followed by the death of a dear friend. There is here a fine sense of human feeling combined with divine power which John does not regard as incongruous. The last, as well as the first, of the seven typical miracles which he relates is wrought in the domestic circle, and each is declared to manifest the glory of the Lord. The divine and the human are thus thrown into impressive harmony.

1. **The Message from Bethany (3-6).** "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." Probably the exact language of the message. In Christ's first visit to Bethany (Luke x, 38) Lazarus is not mentioned. What unreported events must have occurred between these two visits in order to account for the affectionate relations of Jesus and this man? In His response to the announcement that illness has stricken His friend Jesus reveals His profound knowledge of the significance of this fact. He predicts that this



sickness will not terminate in irrevocable death, but will manifest the glory of God, and thereby the Son will be glorified.

Though Jesus loved the family at Bethany, He made no movement toward the afflicted household for two days. The journey to Bethany would require a day. It is apparent that Lazarus was already dead when the message was delivered (v. 17). Jesus waited until He had finished the work which He had in hand. The teaching applies to unanswered prayers. It is not through lack of God's love that our petitions are not immediately granted, but on account of the fullness of His knowledge.

2. **The Journey to Bethany (7-16).** Jesus finally announces His decision to return to Judæa. Bethany is not mentioned, but the hostile province in which it is located. This at once suggests the peril of His purpose. Perhaps this is His intention, in order that His disciples may gradually be prepared for the final catastrophe. They protest against His determination, and remind Him of the dangers in Judæa from which He has but recently escaped. While their words betray weakness, they also show devotion to His interests. Jesus makes no direct reply to their warnings, but gives expression to a great general principle of wide application. He tells them in effect that He is perfectly safe so long as He is in pursuit of duty. The time is short (ix, 4), but it is sufficient. He can not add to His days by caution, and no one can shorten them till His work is done. He would indeed be in peril if He should turn aside from duty (9, 10). Under a beautiful figure, which they do not understand, and later in terms which are plain, He tells them that Lazarus is dead. When they believe him to be merely sleeping, they attempt to dissuade Jesus from His purpose as being unnecessary, since sleep is a favorable symptom. But when He informs them that Lazarus is actually dead, and that He is glad it has turned out thus,

since it will enable Him to perform work which will strengthen their faith in Him, Thomas says with fine resolution, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him!" The disciple will not pretend a faith which he does not have, but his loyalty will not permit him to desert the Master in the hour of peril.

## II. THE SCENE BEFORE THE MIRACLE (17-30).

On arrival at Bethany, which is but two miles distant from Jerusalem, thus making it easy for a great crowd of Jews to be present, Jesus found that Lazarus had been entombed four days, and that many friends and neighbors had assembled to engage in the solemn mourning which usually lasted seven days. Among these were doubtless many persons hostile to the Master, who would now be offered another opportunity to believe in Him (17-19).

1. **Jesus and Martha (20-27).** The characteristics of the two sisters are plainly marked in the narrative. As soon as Martha, who is engaged in some household duty, has tidings of the Master's arrival, she runs out to meet Him. Mary remaining in her chamber, absorbed in her grief, does not receive intelligence of His coming at once. When Martha gently protests that if Jesus had come sooner her brother might have been kept from death, she quickly follows with a profession of her faith in the Master's ability even now to accomplish whatever His love prompts Him to ask of His Father (21, 22). When Jesus assures her that Lazarus shall rise again, she admits that this will be true in the general resurrection, but appears to take no comfort from it in the present situation (23, 24). Then Jesus utters those immeasurable words, "I am the resurrection," etc. He would have her understand that not only has He power to impart life and to effect resurrection, but that He is in Himself life and resurrection. The soul is directed in these words not to the future, but to the present. He that believes in the Christ

even if he has died physically shall live eternally, and he that lives physically and believes shall not die eternally. "The whole history of the raising of Lazarus is a parable of life through death; of life through what is called death, of death through what is called life." (*Westcott.*) On hearing these words Martha's faith, which has been steadily developing, breaks forth into the confession, "I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world" (27).

2. **Jesus and Mary (28-32).** Martha's soul being temporarily at rest through faith, she summons Mary—"The Master is come and calleth for thee"—doing so secretly, and for this purpose using a title for Jesus which will not betray Him, if her words are overheard. She knows the sentiments of some of these mourners. Jesus has not come into the town, not desiring to attract undue attention, but is near the tomb, which is outside the place, not in a public cemetery, but perhaps in a garden, as would befit the evident circumstances of the family. Thither Mary quickly came when she learned the Master had arrived, and falling at His feet uttered the same pathetic strain which had fallen from the lips of her sister (32). Meanwhile the mourners, supposing that Mary had gone to the tomb to weep there, hastily followed, that they might mingle their lamentations with hers. Martha's attempt to preserve Christ from undue publicity was thus a failure.

### III. THE MIRACLE (33-44).

1. **The Emotions of Jesus (33-38).** A note is now sounded which John touches frequently in his gospel, and which is very emphatic in this chapter. The perfect humanity of Jesus is exhibited in close relationship with a wonderful display of His divinity. His affection for His friends, His sympathetic sorrow, His profound mental agitation, as manifested in this story, reveal the man as clearly as the mir-

acle itself discloses God. Three emotional outbursts are recorded here.

- (1) When Jesus beheld the grief of Mary and the demonstration of the mourners it is said "He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled," or "troubled Himself," as the marginal reading has it. Into the utmost depths of that emotion we can not penetrate, but it expressed something more than a natural human sympathy. "He troubled Himself," which is the better rendering, suggests that Jesus willed the utterance of His feelings at this moment, though they were ever under perfect control. As Westcott says, Christ "took away the sufferings and diseases of men in some sense by taking them on Himself." Here then may have been a voluntary entrance of the divine mind into the very abyss of human sorrow, as symbolized by this individual case; for the death of Lazarus is the type of universal human experience, and the sorrow of the sisters is the sorrow of the world. But the agitation of Christ's spirit goes even deeper than this. It can not be explained simply as grief. The language in the original will not permit this. The margin of the Revised Version renders it, "He was moved with indignation in the spirit." There is an evident blending of anger with sorrow in the phrase, "He groaned in the spirit and troubled Himself." At what was He indignant? Many and various are the answers given to this question. (a) It is said He was indignant *at*, not *in* His spirit, being disturbed by his own weakness in yielding to a human emotion. But this is utterly discordant with His character as elsewhere delineated in the Gospels. (b) His indignation was the inevitable reaction of His divine nature against His human nature, which is another putting of the preceding explanation. But this is virtually saying that the divine and human in Jesus constitute two distinct personalities. (c) He was indignant that the sisters of Lazarus and their mourning friends should so utterly misapprehend the significance of death,

which in the view of His doctrines is not a calamity, but the providential means of bringing added glory to believers. Or, He was disturbed by the weakness of their faith in Him. But this would seem to be contradicted by His own subsequent weeping (35). (d) He was indignant at the hypocrisy of the Jews, who, while mingling their lamentations with those of the sisters, were preparing to treat Him treacherously. (e) He was indignant at the temporary triumph of evil, as represented by death, which is the consequence of sin. (f) He shudders at the thought that the miracle which He is about to perform in response to His affection for this bereaved family, and which will manifest the glory of God, will be the occasion of hastening His enemies to complete their purpose of putting Him to death. The sphere of His agitation is the *spirit*, which in the Scriptural usage is the seat of the religious emotion, in distinction from the *soul*, which is the seat of the natural affections. Perhaps there was a mingling of several of these elements in His indignation. It would seem that finally by an effort of His will He subdued the emotions which had temporarily shaken Him, and ended His agitation by exclaiming, "Where have ye laid him?"

- (2) When the mourners had shown Jesus the tomb of Lazarus it is said "Jesus wept," that is, He simply shed tears. The reserve of the record is very remarkable. Jesus broke forth into lamentations over the nation and its capital (Luke xix, 41), but in this instance He exhibits deep sympathy with those whom He loves. He who later would partake of death now partakes of the sorrow caused by death.
- (3) When the Jews witnessed His tears, they cried out, "Behold, how He loved him!" This was not an entirely correct interpretation, for Jesus knew that Lazarus would return to life. The sorrow of the sisters moved Him, rather than the experience of the brother. Perhaps the questioning of the Jews concerning Christ's ability to save His friend from death

may have been sincere (37), but it seems more probable that it contained a sneer of incredulity. If so, it will account for the renewed struggle in the spirit of Jesus, which is not so violent as the first, nor so open as the second, and is more quickly suppressed than either. "Shuddering in Himself again" (*Godet*), He comes immediately to the sepulcher. It is a cave and a stone is placed against its portal.

2. **The Act of Resurrection (39-44).** When Jesus commands the tomb to be opened, Martha gently protests again. Corruption has already begun, she argues. She can not endure the thought of exposing the beloved form. Her faith suffers a temporary obscuration. It is not strange that this should be, for the marvel of the miracle now performed has made many minds pause and question. Yet nothing is impossible to the Almighty. "He who has created the organic cell within the inorganic matter is not incapable of re-establishing life within the inanimate substance." (*Godet*.) Jesus reminds the hesitant Martha that He has promised a revelation of the divine glory to her if she can believe, and the stone is removed. A prayer, not of supplication, but of thanksgiving, now follows. A command to the dead is uttered in a loud tone. The man comes forth in the clothing of "the silent house." The company is ordered to release him from the garments of the tomb. Without a word of comment the mighty demonstration of Christ's glory is allowed to make its own impression. What Lazarus said, what emotions were awakened by his restoration, what further occurred in his career—of these things nothing is known.

#### IV. CONSEQUENCES OF THE MIRACLE (45-57).

1. **The Witnesses Divided (45, 46).** Many of those who beheld this "sign" yielded instant faith to Jesus. Plummer suggests that all of those who actually witnessed the miracle, standing by Mary's side, were



convinced of Christ's divinity, even those who were naturally hostile to Him. But there were others who, whatever may have been their motive, went away and reported the occurrence to the authorities.

2. **The Decision of the Council (47-53).** Having convoked a session of the Sanhedrin, the chief priests and the Pharisees deliberated on what should be done in the situation. There was no question as to fact, for there was apparently no doubt that the miracle had been wrought. They were troubled about the probable outcome of the event. The multitudes would gather to the standard of Jesus. If then He should head a Messianic revolt, the Roman power would crush the Jewish nation.

In this crisis Caiaphas, the high priest, becomes the mouthpiece of the council. He reminds the assembly of a national adage. The hour has struck when one man must die in order that the whole people may be preserved. The predestined victim is Jesus. John says that this pronouncement is in the nature of a prophecy, though the high priest did not realize that he was exercising his prophetic function. Moreover, his proclamation was applicable not only to the people in Palestine, but to all "the children of God that were scattered abroad." From the moment that the words of Caiaphas were accepted by the Sanhedrin the doom of Jesus was sealed.

3. **The Gathering Storm (54-57).** Jesus retires to a place in the wilderness northeast of Jerusalem, not precisely identified by the name, Ephraim, given to it, and continues there with His disciples until "His hour is come." As the Passover approaches, and the crowds wend their way to Jerusalem, the curious seek for Jesus, and wonder among themselves whether He will appear at the feast. In every mind there is a premonition of the final catastrophe.

### A Very Present Help.

*"The Master is come, and calleth for thee."*

JOHN xi, 28.

It is the glory of Jesus that He was not only available to all who inquired for Him, but that He also sought out individuals to whom He would bring blessing. We sometimes sigh for Him now, and say:

"If Jesus came on earth again  
And walked and talked in field and street,  
Who would not lay his human pain  
Low at those heavenly feet?"

"And leave the loom, and leave the lute,  
And leave the volume on the shelf  
To follow Him, unquestioning, mute,  
If 'twere the Lord Himself."

But faith realizes that He is actually in the world and that He comes to the souls of the weary with a personal ministry.

Bismarck once said, "If it be true that (as was reported he declared of himself) the felling of a tree was the only anxiety that ever caused Gladstone a sleepless night, I do not envy him; for it would reflect little credit upon his heart." If Christ had shown the profoundest intellect and the uttermost power without the tenderest sympathy, He would have lacked the one quality which most endears Him to humanity. The gentle grace of His compassion compels the homage of those who would stubbornly resist the authority of His will and the supremacy of His mind. And thus it has been ordained that the world shall have opportunity

"To learn not only by the comet's rush  
But a rose's birth,—not by the grandeur, God,—  
But the comfort, Christ."

He comes to exhibit His fellowship with human suffering, and to proffer His consolation to those who are burdened with grief. He drew near to the home of Mary and Martha under adverse circumstances, despite obvious and ever-thickening perils, against the protests of His faint-hearted disciples, who reminded Him of the cruel purpose of His enemies to destroy His life. Nevertheless He came. He had a mission to perform. He must comfort the mourner. He could do this because He was divine. He would not be overwhelmed by the sense of human misery. He knew how to relieve the sorrows of mankind.



The difference between the best that men can do in this regard and the perfect thing Christ achieves, may be illustrated by an historic contrast with the career of the myth-enshrined Buddha. He was the son of a king, so the story runs, and was endowed with royal qualities. Gifts of genius and physical beauty were his, and he easily outstripped his comrades and masters in feats of bodily and intellectual strength. But from his childhood he was possessed of a deep melancholy, from which nothing could arouse him. It was the insoluble problem of life which weighed upon his soul. To divert his thoughts from this solemn theme, the king, his father, practiced many arts. A beautiful princess became his bride. A gorgeous palace rose to receive him. Within its spacious courts the sorrows of the world were not permitted to penetrate. He knew nothing of human misery. All was light and beauty and joy within the royal precincts. But one morning the young prince with a large retinue was driven through the eastern gate of the city, and met on the road an old man, broken and decrepit. One could see the veins over his whole body. His teeth chattered, his frame was covered with wrinkles, he was hardly able to utter hollow and unmelodious sounds. He leaned upon a stick, his limbs and joints constantly trembling. "Who is that man?" inquired Buddha of the driver. "He is small and weak, his body is wasted away, he is barely

able to walk. Is there something peculiar in his family, or is this the common lot of all created beings?" "Sir," replied the servant, "that man is sinking under old age. He is without support and useless. People have abandoned him like a dead tree in the forest. But this is not peculiar to his family. In every creature youth is defeated by old age. Your father, your mother, all your relatives, all your friends, will come to this sad state." "Alas!" cried the prince, "are creatures so ignorant, so weak and foolish, as to be proud of the youth by which they are intoxicated, not seeing the old age which awaits them? As for me, I go away. What have I, the future prey of old age, to do with pleasure?"

Twice more he drove out in his chariot, only to encounter on each occasion some wretched, suffering fellow-creature. The first was a man at the point of death, parched and wasted with the fever. "Alas!" exclaimed the Buddha, "health is but the sport of a dream, and the fear of suffering must take this frightful form. Where is the wise man, who, after having seen what he is, could any longer think of joy or pleasure?" The next time he was driving to his pleasure gardens through the western gate, the prince saw a dead body on the road, lying on a bier, covered with a cloth. The friends stood about crying, sobbing, tearing their hair, covering their heads with dust, striking their breasts and uttering wild cries. The prince, again calling his coachman to witness the painful scene, exclaimed: "O! woe to youth, which must be destroyed by old age! Woe to health, which must be destroyed by so many diseases! Woe to this life, where a man remains so short a time! If there were no old age, no disease, no death; if these could be made captive forever!" Then betraying for the first time his intentions, the young prince said: "Let us turn back; I must think how to accomplish deliverance."

The sight of a mendicant brought him to a decision. The life of a devotee—austere, self-conquering, should be his. His resolution was taken. Kingdom, power, glory, wife, all must be abandoned while he shut himself up in solitude to lead the life of an ascetic. Such is the

story of his renunciation, and there is undeniable beauty in it. But there is no help in it for miserable humanity. For Buddha's remedy for the curse of human existence, with its ten thousand sorrows, was the gospel of annihilation. Existence must be regarded as a fatal illusion. Self-extinction in that Nirvana, which it is impossible to describe in exact terms, was his panacea for the ills of this mortal state.



Now Jesus of Nazareth felt the misery of the world as keenly as Buddha. Nay, He went deeper into the sorrows of humanity than any other has done. The desperate agony of embittered human life He understood to its very bottom. But He had a better way of meeting human misery than by preaching a philosophy which denies the reality of life. He came to bring consolation, and the power of endurance, and "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding." Jesus came to Bethany to weep. That is a fact which enchains the attention of the world. The Son of God shed tears. "Weak man," the lordly Roman would sneer, who turned his face and concealed it in his robes, when he would weep. "Behold! how He loved him!" exclaimed the Jews, as they saw these gracious drops of pity fall from His eyes. "Matchless exhibition of compassion!" cries the Christian, who reveres the "Man of Sorrows" as "The Lord of Glory." For this is God who is manifesting such sympathy.

In the hour of sorrow we have all felt the inadequacy of human sympathy. Perhaps we have even been exasperated by the unhelpful words of well-meaning friends. There sat Mary and Martha upon the ground with veiled faces and unsandaled feet, surrounded by a dozen or more friends and professional mourners. What an irritating experience! How little calculated to bring peace to a disturbed heart! But Jesus comes to weep great sincere tears of sorrow and sympathy. And His coming is sure to be gratefully received. There is joy even in grief, if Jesus makes His entrance into our homes.

The contrasts of sorrow and satisfaction are important. Socrates in his prison argued with his companions just before his death, that pain and pleasure are inseparable, and he illustrated it by a little quibbling symbolism about the chafing of his legs by the chain which bound him. That may have been almost an unworthy illustration from so great a man. But Christ has shown us that in the darkest night we may see the brightest light; that in the bitterest cup the sweetest draught may be found, for He cometh and calleth, and poureth in His balm, and sorrow becomes worth while, that one may have Him to administer consolation and sympathy.



He comes as the interpreter of life's mysteries, the revealer of human destiny. Said a French genius, "If Jesus had done nothing in His earthly ministry but teach men to say, 'Our Father which art in heaven,' that would have been abundant compensation for the vast outlay involved in His dwelling among men." But the Fatherhood of God was only one of His many doctrines. He came to Bethany not merely to weep, and thus show the sympathy of the paternal heart. He came to talk in His own matchless way. He pronounced one of the sublimest sentences that ever issued from the Divine mind, when He said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth, and believeth in Me, shall never die."

One easily believes that John transcribed that sentence verbatim. That was an utterance which did not require a repetition. Once heard, it could never be forgotten. The critics tell us that there is some language in this great book which is purely human and some that is partly human, partly divine; but this language is all divine. The syllables are God's own choosing; the rhetorical arrangement is His. The thought is divine. Had you been present on the occasion when Christ uttered these words, you would have said: "He who speaks thus is either God the omnipotent, or the earth will now open



and swallow Him down as the deadliest blasphemer, for whom the jaws of perdition yearn." You can not conceive it possible that a man could get his breath instantly after hearing Christ utter those thrilling syllables. You can not think that any man in his senses could hear that sublime statement and be just the same man ever after. There is something inexpressibly awe-inspiring in that tremendous utterance which Jesus came up to Bethany to deliver, for it contains the revelation of the source and sustenance of life. Jesus gave a sufficient answer to the whole problem of human destiny when He said: "I am the resurrection." Had the Egyptian heard and believed, he must have forever abandoned his trivial notions of a human tribunal sitting in judgment over the character of the dead on the shore of a sacred lake. Had Plato heard and trusted, he would have smiled at the feebleness of his argument for the immortality of the soul when compared with the majestic certainty of this immortal giver of life. What need had any Greek of Eleusinian mysteries to protect him in peril by sea or land, if he could have vital union with One who said: "If any man believe in Me he shall never die?" All intelligences have inquired about life after death. It is the agony of the human heart in all ages that so little has been revealed of the shadowy land. But Jesus stood at the tomb of Lazarus on that eventful day, with the weeping company about Him, and answered for all time the question of all philosophies, and all religions, and all agnosticisms, "I am the resurrection and the life." And it is the only soul-soothing answer humanity has ever obtained. You swing your telescope of reason far out over that field of inky darkness, which spreads itself like a pall beyond the river of death, whose hither shore is visible, but whose farther banks are lost in impenetrable darkness, and you will descry only a few twinkling stars of hope, but no great sun-blaze of certainty. Christ alone speaks definitely on the question—"If a man die shall he live again?" And His solution of the mystery is this: "He that believeth in Me shall never die."

He comes to work a wonder, and to demonstrate His unfailing power. He came to Bethany to perform the all-inclusive miracle of raising the dead. Before the cave, in which His friend was entombed, He shouted, "Lazarus, come forth!" and the dead proceeded to enter anew upon abundant life. In like manner He comes to charin men away from the death of sin into the life of righteousness. It is indisputable that Christ never comes into any human life without working miracles. Wherever He enters there is transformation of character and entrance into newness of life.

Many good people are perplexed because they do not witness such supernatural interventions in our times as were shown in the period of Christ's earthly ministry. Alas! their eyes seem to be holden, that they can not see! The greatest wonders are being constantly wrought in their very presence. There are grades and differences in miracles. The lowest form is the physical, like turning water into wine or healing the sick. Above this is the miracle of mental elevation, like the divine inspiration of the writers who gave us the Scriptures. Higher than either are miracles of spiritual transformation. All these were witnessed on the day of Pentecost. Cloven tongues of fire sitting on the heads of the apostles were seen. A sound as of a rushing mighty wind was heard. A thrill of ecstasy was felt. These phenomena were physical. Then the disciples spoke with languages in which they had never been instructed. That was the miracle of intellectual illumination. Then Peter, the vacillating and impetuous coward, was transformed into Peter the lion-hearted, brave, steady and unwavering; and three thousand people were converted. That was the spiritual miracle. Now Jesus is not engaged in our day in performing many physical miracles. I do not doubt His ability to walk the waves of the Atlantic as He trod the surface of Galilee, or to cure the paralytic in New York as easily as He did in Jerusalem. It is simply a matter of expediency with Him. For reasons which are sufficient to His wisdom, He is not performing many such wonders apart from the employment of modern scientific

agencies. But He does more frequently show His power by lifting men above themselves, and by inspiring them with an intellectual activity quite transcending their native powers. He enables the uncultured to preach His gospel with an eloquence which no instruction of the schools can impart. He qualifies them to offer prayers, which surpass the grandest liturgies we possess, and He inspires them with ability to overcome cultured paganism and learned agnosticism in a manner which outrivals all philosophy and out-maneuvers all logic. Then He does perform miracles of spiritual regeneration in every quarter of the globe. Apollonius of Tyana, Æsculapius, Aristeas, and others were said by their contemporaries to work miracles, but they died, and their reputed powers went with them into the tomb. Miracle workers, magicians, soothsayers have come and gone. Isaiah saw the astrologers, star-gazers, monthly prognosticators fail before the judgments of God. But Christ has gone on working miracles for nineteen centuries. It is a fascinating story. He was supposed to be dead, and was pent up in a rock-hewn sepulcher. But on the third day He walked in beauty and strength among His friends. He was afterward seen to sweep skyward in a radiant cloud, fit chariot for an ascending King. Yet He evidently did not abandon the world, for His power has continued everywhere in the earth. He had vanished from the sight of men a considerable period, when Saul of Tarsus, persecuting His followers, was met on the Damascus road by Him, and transformed into a Christian apostle. Jesus had been derided as a fallen dead man for a couple of centuries, when Julian the Apostate, wounded on a field of battle, flung a handful of blood into the air, and cried: "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!" Triumphed He undoubtedly had, for though Diocletian had, after a merciless persecution, struck a medal with the boastful inscription, "The Christian religion has been exterminated," yet in a few short years Christianity captured the Roman empire. On through the centuries He has gone winning the world to Himself. This He has done by the perpetual performance of miracles in the transformation of

character. He has turned the bestial libertine and the sottish drunkard into apostles of purity and sobriety. He has crowded selfishness out of narrow hearts, and filled the empty chamber with Himself, making it a temple of God.

“He speaks, and listening to His voice,  
New life the dead receive;  
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,  
The humble poor believe.”

What greater miracles than these can any man ask as the proof of Christ's continuous power?



## SECTION IV.

### PERIOD OF JUDGMENT AND TRANSITION.

#### CHAPTER XII.

THIS chapter has been called "the watershed of the Gospel." It marks the point of transition from the public ministry of Jesus to the more private disclosures of His divine love which were made during the last days of His earthly life.

We now enter upon the period of judgment in Christ's public ministry. The manifestation of Christ's glory in works and words to the world is closing. The witnesses have been presented in the foregoing chapters. The opposite results of belief and unbelief have been chronicled from time to time as the action of John's gospel has moved on toward its conclusion. The total effects will be shown in the culminating events of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection. These manifestations of His glory will occur chiefly in the presence of His disciples, who will finally prove themselves to be full of faith and devotion, save in a single instance.

The section falls into the following parts:

1. THE SUPPER AT BETHANY.
2. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.
3. THE QUEST OF THE GREEKS.
4. THE FINAL JUDGMENT.





## XXIII.

# THE SUPPER AT BETHANY.

## CHAPTER XII. 1-11.

If this is not a picture constructed wholly by art, it represents the recollections of one who had himself been present at the events of the day, who had moved freely to and fro, and very probably talked them over after the day was done.—*Sunday*.

Six days before the Passover—the last and greatest one in the life of Jesus—He comes to Bethany, which John distinguishes as the home of Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead. What memories cluster about the place! It is probably Saturday night, at the close of the Jewish Sabbath. The next day, corresponding to the Christian Sunday, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem occurs.

### I. THE SUPPER (1-8).

Compare accounts of the same event in Matt. xxvi, 6-13, and Mark xiv, 3-9. The supper seems to be occasioned by gratitude for the work wrought in Bethany. It is a kind of semi-public testimonial, a warm-hearted protest against the decree of the chief priests and Pharisees (xi, 57). It occurs in the house of Simon the leper, as we learn from Matthew and Mark. Perhaps this man had been healed by Christ, and possibly he was a relative or intimate friend of Lazarus, who is the figure of distinction in the scene, and who sits as guest; so the mention of his presence would indicate. At this supper Martha serves—a characteristic touch (Luke x, 40).

1. **A Surprising Occurrence (3).** Mary will also serve, and in her characteristic fashion. Toward the close of the meal she breaks a flask of nard—every precious—and anoints the Master as He reclines at

table. Several points of extravagance are noticeable in her conduct. The financial expenditure is very considerable. The cost of the perfume was not less than \$100 in our money. The flask was hermetically sealed, and could not be broken without the loss of all its contents. The act of devotion itself ran beyond the conventional bounds of hospitality, for Mary not only anointed the head of Jesus, as Matthew and Mark relate, but also His feet, as John records. But Mary's devotion made still further sacrifice. The profusion of the liquid perfume fairly drenched the feet of Jesus; whereupon she unbound her hair—a disgrace for a Hebrew woman in public—and wiped them with her long tresses. This was the utmost stretch of personal homage. "No service is too mean for her person. All that she *is* belongs to Him, as well as all that she *has*." (*Godet*.) Perhaps she had heard of the deed which the sinful woman in Galilee had performed in devotion to Christ, and was determined that no friend of His should fall short of the alien.

2. **An Ignoble Protest (4-6).** The churl Judas has not fineness of soul enough to see the beauty of this act, and condemns it with coarse indelicacy. Mere courtesy ought to have withheld his blame. The Synop-  
tists do not mention his name. Matthew says "the disciples" uttered complaint. Mark says, "Some" were indignant. But John knew the inspiration of their resentment, and puts the figure of the malcontent before us. The plausible reason which Judas gives for his censure only veils the iniquity of his heart. Avarice was the spring of his indignation. He carried the bag and was accustomed to pilfer its contents, John hints. The "poor" for whom he cared were represented by himself exclusively. In addition to avarice, disappointment over Christ's whole program doubtless actuated him. He had witnessed the attempt of the multitude to make Christ a king after the feeding of the five thousand, and could not approve of His refusal. His apostasy

in spirit had then been disclosed (vi, 70, 71). His irritation only waited for such a chance to express itself as was afforded by this occurrence.

3. **An Unexpected Commendation (7, 8).** "Let her alone," etc. Do not disturb the sanctity of this beautiful deed. She has anticipated my embalming. It is a parting tribute. If this tender ministry were performed after My death no one would condemn it. Why do you object to it now? In a few days I shall be gone. Perhaps she foresees My doom in the gathering darkness, and would comfort Me. The poor you have with you always—there is a constant obligation. Me ye have now, but not forever—there is a temporary and immediate obligation. The encomium pronounced by Jesus is given in more extended form by the other evangelists. "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her." (Matt. xxvi, 13.) World-wide fame for Mary; world-wide infamy for Judas.

## II. THE SEQUEL (9-11).

The chief priests were enraged by the results of Christ's increasing popularity. Every triumph of Jesus, according to John's record, only intensified the hatred of the rulers. He has no sooner received this superlative tribute of affection than they strike at Him. This time it is through his friend Lazarus. The crowds run together to see him. The dead man raised to life is a perpetual memorial of Christ's power. Belief is developing every day, and for this reason they are furious.

### Divine Extravagance.

*"Then said Jesus, Let her alone."*—JOHN xii, 7.

The Master who admonished His disciples to "gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost," when He miraculously fed the multitude, also commended a woman for the prodigal expenditure which she made in token of her devotion to Him. The contrariety of His conduct gives perplexity to those only who fail to see that life is not a set of rules and that its surest guide is love.

Thomas Carlyle went one day with the artist Millais to look at the latter's house. After gazing with wonder at all its splendors, its marble pavements, its white marble columns, its stately staircase and beautiful dados, he turned to Millais and said, in his brusque manner, "Has paint done all this, Mr. Millais?" The painter laughed and replied, "It has, Mr. Carlyle." "Then," said the occupant of the modest house at Chelsea, "all I have to say is, there are more fools in the world than I thought there were." That people should pay an artist for bits of canvas smeared with paint sums of money of sufficient magnitude to enable him to live like a prince is a thing calculated to stagger many persons who are devoid of an æsthetic passion, though one must feel that Carlyle was slyly facetious rather than dead in earnest when he spoke thus to Millais. Lavish expenditures which apparently serve no practical end, like that of Mary at Bethany, puzzle matter-of-fact persons seriously. Judas Iscariot was a thief—we have it on John's word—and had the bag, and carried away what was put therein; and the poor he cared for were confined to himself. But there are honest people, with an earnest desire to see worthy things accomplished in society, who ask, "To what purpose is this waste?" when they observe enormous gifts bestowed upon objects which they feel are not related to any serious, business-like undertaking. They have not discovered the truth of George W. Cable's aphorism, that "Religion without poetry is as dead a thing as poetry without religion." There is never an act of apparently prodigal benevolence that some one who

knows the arithmetic of the world better than he does the algebra of love will not hasten to pronounce his condemnation on the waste. It is an edifying thing to observe how Jesus disposes of such a case.



Let us paraphrase His words. "Do not vex this woman." He virtually says to His disciples (and we learn from Matthew that they all murmured when one had started the protest), "Be gentlemen at least. How rude, indelicate, and boorish it is to blurt out your complaint in her presence. If you can not understand this beautiful act, do not trample the woman in the dust who was capable of doing it. Moreover, I approve of what you call 'this waste.' She has done a good work on Me. If you can not appreciate it, will you not be considerate enough to let Me have some joy in it? Do not worry about the poor for whom you profess such concern. You will have opportunities enough for charity in their behalf. But I shall not be with you much longer. If I were ready for the tomb you would not grudge the attentions which affection would pay to My body. Why protest now that this woman has anointed Me in advance of My burial? Be assured that this beautiful deed will run round the world. No power can hem it in. Wherever the gospel is preached this that she has done will be repeated as a memorial of her." He might have added with equal pertinency, "And your cheap criticism will stand up against you forever."

Let us get out of the world of calculation once in awhile, and into the realm of ideal love. Economy, prudence, frugality—these are exemplary virtues, but they are means to an end: they enable their possessor to be extravagant when the justifiable opportunity arrives. When love triumphs the entire hoard of a life-time must be sacrificed. Have you never heard of a rich man beggaring himself for the sake of a son dearer to him than the accumulations of half a hundred years?

Let there be a little more of the fragrance of wasted perfume in the world. If devout persons wish to squan-



der their substance on the Lord, ought we to take out a pencil and estimate the cost, and reckon what might have been accomplished with the price, if it had been applied to a practical thing?

If a man spends a large amount of money on his friends, for sheer love of them, and not for the sake of display, is it not churlish to censure him? Particularly if you know he is generous in his contributions to the welfare of the unfortunate. If soldiers hurl themselves against immovable ranks of enemies, and are dashed to pieces like the billows breaking on a rocky coast, just because they will show their contempt of death and their love for the flag, shall we carp about the needlessness of their sacrifice? If a man will give everything he owns to Jesus Christ, and reduce himself to poverty that he may follow his Master without a single distraction, shall we call him visionary and impractical?

The newspapers recently reported that a man in the West had years ago deeded all his property to a missionary society, and now in his old age he had been compelled to accept the bounty of a public institution for the poor. The tale proved to be an invention, but suppose it had been true—though it might have reflected on the beneficiaries of his liberality—would not the act itself have been beautiful? And is there too much beauty of that kind in the world?



When Rebecca Salome Foster, affectionately known as the "Tombs Angel," perished in a terrible fire in New York, eminent lawyers addressed the various courts then in session, expressing their profound sorrow over her death, judges pronounced eulogies upon her character from the bench, and the entire body of one court, including every subordinate officer, attended her funeral. Who was this woman, that she should be the recipient of such unwonted honors? She was a noble soul lavishing her life upon the unfortunate and the sinning. One of the judges in his address in court said: "Her appearance at the dark and gloomy prison cell was to the inmates

like the entrance of a veritable sunbeam. Numberless lonely and weary hearts have been cheered, gladdened, and even made radiant by her kind ministrations and words of good cheer, and numberless persons who had strayed from the strait and narrow way were brought back by her sweet influences to the paths of rectitude and virtue." Was that life lost amid the ruins of the criminal classes to whom her work carried her? On the morning of her funeral an Italian woman who had been greatly helped by the "Tombs Angel" in two trials for murder from which she had escaped with acquittal, came to the matron of the prison and said: "I haven't got much money. I am not fit to go to the church in this dress; I'll just go and look in. She was my friend. I have twenty-five cents. Do you suppose if I bought a quarter's worth of flowers they'd take them in?" When assured that probably they would, the poor creature went away to purchase her tribute of love for the woman who had befriended her in a time of awful peril.

Can we estimate the worth of such expenditures in any terms familiar to the commercial world? "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me." That is the justification for sacrifice. These deeds of uncalculating love are grateful to the Master. Christ's disciples did not dream that He who was so strong and wise had any need of Mary's extravagant tribute of affection. They did not fathom the anguish of His spirit occasioned by the world's cold contempt. But He says: "Let her alone. She hath wrought a good work on Me." Against all the criticism of men upon deeds that involve sacrifice Jesus is protesting that these are done for His sake, and that to Him they are the source of deep joy. Cæsar Augustus was accustomed to sit one day each year in the public market-place garbed as a mendicant, to receive the alms of the people. Some persons may regard this as an edifying example of humility, though others may construe it as an exhibition of secret pride. But Jesus would have His followers understand that in every destitute and miserable human being in the world, however

ragged and foul, He is offering Himself as a suppliant for kindness and mercy. If we inquire how we may pay Him the personal tribute which it is evident He so much values, let us learn that whatever is wrought for the elevation of those for whom He died is given directly to Him.



It must have been observed by all careful students of social progress that the persons who are usually regarded as visionary are for the most part the benefactors of the world. The disciples were afraid that the poor would be overlooked if it became the custom for devout friends of Jesus to lavish their gifts upon Him. But he assured them that if they were steadily, regularly, and consistently ministering to the poor who were always before their eyes, they might without injury to others or themselves perform extraordinary acts of love to their Master. If enthusiastic women will rhapsodize in religious feeling, if the saint will linger long hours upon his knees in adoration and communion, if the pietist will meditate and fasten his eyes upon the Lord when he might be doing something to help others, let us not be irritated by these demonstrations of devotion to the person of Christ, let us not decry them as making no capital for the kingdom of God. How do we know their value? And have not the deeply spiritual always shown themselves to have the interests of practical Christianity upon their hearts? Have they not built hospitals and orphanages? Do they not labor for the rescue of the depressed populations of their own and foreign lands? And if they do not always evince the most practical intelligence in directing the work of redeeming society, is it not something that they are giving expression to those lofty ideals which develop character, and is it not more that they are gratifying God by their complete dedication to Him?

Well and truly sings Browning's Abt Vogler :

"All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall  
 exist;  
 Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor  
 power  
 Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the  
 melodist  
 When eternity confirms the conception of an hour.  
 The high that proved too high, the heroic for the earth  
 too hard,  
 The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the  
 sky,  
 Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;  
 Enough that He heard it once: we shall hear it bye  
 and bye."

## XXIV.

# THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.

## CHAPTER XII. 12-19.

Whether we regard the sublimity of its thought, the width and spirituality of its conception of religion, the depth of its moral insight, or the tragic pathos of its story, we can not but feel that we have before us the work of a master mind.—*James Drummond.*

### Introduction.

HE who had hitherto resisted every proposal of the multitude to pay Him royal honors now on the eve of His passion yields to the enthusiasm of the people. The narrative herein given must be compared with Matt. xxi, 1-11; Mark xi, 1-11; Luke xix, 29-40, in order to obtain a full appreciation of the event which it records. Each of the evangelists appears to describe it from a different point of view. The Synoptics evidently follow Jesus from Bethany, but John starts with the crowd in Jerusalem, which, on hearing that Jesus is approaching the capital, hurries away to meet Him. Moreover, John fits the story into the dramatic scheme of his work. He does not attempt to present a complete detailed description of the triumphal entry. He wishes chiefly to show its causal connection with the final condemnation of Jesus. From the raising of Lazarus onward each event brings the climax of the tragedy nearer. The triumphal entry dispells every feeling of hesitation which has restrained his adversaries.

### I. THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE PEOPLE (12-13).

The day following the supper at which Mary anointed Jesus it became known in Jerusalem that Jesus would come into the city. Having spent the night in Bethany,

it is evident from Mark's narrative that Jesus did not begin His progress toward Jerusalem until the latter half of the day. It was too late on His arrival in Jerusalem for Him to accomplish anything further. He therefore returned to Bethany for the night, and the expulsion of the traders from the Temple occurred on the following day. The crowd which moved from Jerusalem to meet Him must have included travelers from many countries, who had come to celebrate the Passover, though a very large proportion of them were doubtless Galileans. Those who started earliest from Jerusalem reached Bethany in time to form an escort for Jesus on His entrance into the city. The rest must have met Him on the road and swelled the company attending Him. Taking palm branches—emblems of strength, beauty, peace, and joy—they waved them before Him, and cried, "Hosanna," etc. Their words, as well as their actions, showed that they intended to salute Jesus as Messiah. The phraseology of the people is given variously, for their cries would not always be the same. These acclamations are taken from the 118th Psalm, which is said to have been written for the Feast of the Tabernacles, after the captivity, or for the dedication of the second Temple, and which is distinctly Messianic. "Hosanna," meaning "Save, I pray," is nearly equivalent to the English, "God save the king!" The words, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel," a better reading than that of the Authorized Version, places the divine work and the national mission of the Messiah in perfect unity. There can be no mistaking the meaning of the multitude.

## II. THE ACQUIESCENCE OF JESUS (14-18).

It is evident that Jesus deliberately entered into this movement. He began this progress, knowing that He would receive the acclamations of the people. He even prepared to make His entrance into Jerusalem as impressive as possible. The Synoptists relate that He sent two of His disciples to secure an ass, which John simply says



He "found," and on which He made His advance in royal fashion. This animal was chosen, not so much as a mark of humility, though it did serve this purpose, as an indication that Christ's kingdom was based, not upon wealth and military power, with which horses and chariots were identified in the mind of the Jew, but upon gentleness and peace. The free quotation from Zech. ix, 9, which John would have us understand is prophecy now fulfilled by Christ, accords with this view. It is tantamount to saying, "A king who comes in this fashion will never be an oppressor." The significance of all this the disciples did not grasp at the moment; but after the ascension and the outpouring of Pentecost they understood it as fulfillment of prophecy, and realized their own unconscious part in it (15, 16).

There are apparently two multitudes mentioned in verses 17, 18, confirming the description already given. There are those who came from Bethany with Jesus, having witnessed the raising of Lazarus, and there are those who went out from Jerusalem to meet Him, having heard the report of this great miracle. In both cases the enthusiasm is due to the same cause, and this is also the cause which urges the rulers to hasten their evil machinations.

### III. THE DESPAIR OF THE PHARISEES (v. 19).

The official enemies of Jesus now realize that halting measures will no longer answer their purpose. "The world," they exclaim with an exaggeration born of their discomfiture, "is gone after him." The counsels of Caiaphas (xi, 49, 50) ought long ago to have prevailed. No time can be lost. Henceforth the whole ecclesiastical organization is solidly massed against Jesus.

### Wanted—By the World.

*"Behold, the world is gone after Him."*—JOHN xii, 19.

"They came to Him from every quarter," is the record of Christ's popularity, made at the very beginning of His public ministry. "And great multitudes followed Him," is, in substance, what is frequently affirmed of Him by the writers who narrate the events of His life. The crowds embarrassed Him. They denied Him the privileges of private life. Throngs poured after His retreating figure when He sought to obtain rest and seclusion. The fact is significant.

It is an aphorism in free governments that the people can be depended upon. The popular instinct is reliable. When the multitude follows its native impulses, the politician in a republic discovers the safe path for his feet. Travelers tell us that "there are shoals of turtles that regularly swim from the Bay of Honduras to the Cayman Islands near Jamaica, a favorable spot for laying their eggs, and make this distance of four hundred and fifty miles with such precision that in thick weather ships can sail under the guidance of their rustling in the water." It is thus by the correct interpreting of the people's movements that statesmen have learned how to order their own courses.

The popular judgment is with Christ to-day, as it was in the days of His earthly career. The Scribes and the Pharisees, the priests and the elders, whose interests seemed to be imperiled by the ministry of Jesus, sought to destroy Him, but "the common people heard Him gladly." The rulers disconsolately said to one another, as they witnessed the enthusiasm of the people at Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after Him!" They expressed their discomfiture in an exaggeration of the truth, but they unconsciously made a prophetic utterance which is being fulfilled in our times. Wherever Christ is clearly seen He is in almost unanimous demand. The pulpit which does not proclaim Christ as the hope of the world has no grip upon the people.

If we are honestly seeking the reasons which make Christ the center of attraction wherever He is disclosed in His real character, we have not far to go. In the first place, He knows men, and they recognize in Him one who understands them with marvelous exactness and perfect sympathy. St. John says of Him, "He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." The basis of this knowledge was in His own complete human nature. He was a kind of epitome of humanity. He summed up in Himself all there is in our human nature except sin, which was brought in from the outside, an alien admixture, more foreign to us than are the depressed populations of Europe to our nation. As the old theologians used to say about Christ's human nature, it is "without excess or defect." He is all that any man is, and no more than any man is, as a man. He is not abnormal in what He is, or in what He is not, sinlessness alone excepted. This makes Him an inspiring and helpful personality at once. Men say, when they read His words, examine His acts, and feel the influence of His life, "Here is a man who knows me better than I know myself." Margaret Fuller once expressed the desire to explore the entire cycle of human experience. Christ is the only person who can be said to have realized that vast ambition, and it has made Him an universal character. He is the one whole man. He has described the circumference of human possibilities. He expresses what humanity feels about sin and righteousness with a fullness which embraces the deepest moral consciousness of the race. The commandments of God are written upon the texture of the human soul. When Christ speaks men hear a familiar voice. They recognize in Him the prophet and seer of universal humanity. He thus becomes the articulate exponent of their greatest aims, their noblest feelings, their sublimest sentiments. What wonder that He should be so universally attractive! "Behold, the world is gone after Him!"



Again, Christ commands the attention of the world because he knows God. This knowledge is based on His

divine nature, as His knowledge of men is based on His human nature. He is the expression of God in terms of human life. With remarkable felicity He is called the Word. He is the manifestation of God in the flesh. This makes Him wondrously attractive, for the world is anxious to learn about God.

What other subject would hold the multitude so continuously and so long? We are surprised that a few thousand people will crowd the largest auditorium of a city to listen to political harangues during a stirring campaign. We wonder at the throngs which nightly repair to the numerous theaters. But it is a far more impressive thing to behold the millions who throughout the entire world congregate in churches, cathedrals, and chapels to hear about God. Even the infidel lecturer secures his audience by talking *against* God. Any mountebank or charlatan can obtain a hearing if he will speak about God. There is no topic more current or more compelling.

If we can find any one who will give us a helpful idea of God we are ready to follow him anywhere. That explains the vogue of many a fantastic cult which is to-day imposing upon the credulity of the race. There is a subtle feeling that possibly the most grotesque religious leader may be able to make more obvious and intelligible the character of God. Now, Christ is the supreme revelation of God. Philip's natural request, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us," is met with the response, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also." God comes forth into clear shining in the figure of Jesus Christ.

Moreover, Christ knows how to bring man and God together. This knowledge is based on his complete divine-human nature. "There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ." The streams of heaven and earth flow together in Him. By showing the infinite pity of God, and the amazing love of the Father in heaven, He is attracting the sinful race back to the throne of the Eternal. By His cross He is perpetually reconciling men to God. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me," is His promise, and every hour since His exaltation upon

Calvary has witnessed the fulfillment of that prediction. "Behold, the world is gone after Him."



It is sometimes suggested that the Gospel is effete because the Churches in some instances fail of accomplishing the salvation of society. The critics apparently forget that the custodians of Christ's teachings may themselves be at fault through lack of simple fidelity to their Master. The permanency of Christ's message to humanity is one of its greatest wonders. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," said Jesus, "but My words shall not pass away." Other men's words and works become obsolete or require emendation. The philosophers, scientists, critics change their positions and take new points of view. The author corrects the mistakes of his first edition in subsequent issues. But there are no amendments to the Sermon on the Mount. Christ has not abated His utterances on any subject in the most trivial degree. His words ring as strong and awaken as hearty response in the souls of men now as ever. No apology for Him is ever necessary. Paul needs an occasional defender. Luther requires an advocate from time to time. Wesley demands an interpreter to reconcile us to his peculiarities. But Jesus stands on His own merits. It is an impertinence to explain Him. He is still saying, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" And the challenge is never taken up. The charm of Christ's life as narrated in the memorials of the Evangelists is perennial. Says Romanes: "True or not, the entire story of the cross, from its commencement in prophetic aspiration to its culmination in the Gospel, is by far the most magnificent presentation in literature. And surely the fact of its having been lived does not detract from its poetic value." The person of Christ stands central to all this. If He be preached effectively His gospel will not lose its hold upon the world. Let it never be forgotten that, as of old, so now, the people are "all waiting for Him."

The human heart is ever the same despite the changing environment of life. It is difficult to believe this when the lives of the lordly and the opulent have been overlaid with luxury and ornament. But, let suffering lay bare the elemental passions of men, and we see clearly that we are all alike, whatever our outward estate.

The old Czar of Russia, father of the reigning sovereign, most colossal of monarchs, forgot his grandeur at the bedside of his dying wife, and broke forth into uncontrollable lamentations when he discovered that she could no longer respond to his affectionate salutations. Gambetta, in the hour of one of his oratorical triumphs, fell into passionate weeping, unstrung and unmanned by the death of his aged mother, the news of which had just been brought to him. But the other day a great savant fell dead in his lecture hall when told that his wife had passed into the eternal world. We are all the same kind of people. Strip off the plumage of the powerful and the pompous, and see how common are the needs of the world. The prince and the pauper are alike in this. The Gospel finds converts in the Roman emperor's household as well as among the fishermen of Galilee. The message of Christ is to the heart of man, and it can not become obsolete until the human heart loses its native qualities.

How unique is that sense of fellowship with Jesus Christ which is experienced by every soul to whom He is made known. There is nothing like it respecting any other character in history. When our dearest friends pass away we seem to retain them for a little while in our consciousness. The rooms they occupied, the books they read, the tools they used, the garments they wore, everything they handled or touched or employed suggests their spiritual presence. But after awhile the sensation of continuous fellowship fades. The afterglow of the sunset deepens into twilight and then into darkness. Then memory idealizes them. They become half divine under the spell which death has woven over their persons. But the sense of personal communion is gone. Thomas Carlyle says of his mother, "O pious mother! kind, good, brave, and truthful soul as ever I have found, and more



than I have elsewhere ever found in this world, your poor Tom, long out of his schooldays now, has fallen very lonely, very lame and broken, in this pilgrimage of his; and you can not help him or cheer him by a kind word any more. From your grave in Ecclefechan Kirk-yard yonder you bid him trust in God, and that also he will try if he can understand and do." This is the feeling we have about all great and good characters except Christ. They can not help us now that the veil has dropped between us and them. But He who is alive for evermore, having parted the curtains which death hung before our vision, is yet with us, and His words are spirit and they are life; they nourish us unto eternal strength. It is He whom we must offer to the world, for it is He whom the world can receive into communion.



It is a principle in art that in the composition of a picture all the parts shall be so arranged as to lead the eye inevitably to the characteristic feature. Whatever prevents this is a capital defect. Accessories are only important as they help this end. When Varelst, the Dutch painter, made his tulips so glorious that they drew attention away from the face of James II, in whose portrait he had placed them, he violated this canon. So did Haydon when, in his picture of Christ's Triumphal Entry, he made the ass on which the Master rode more attractive than the figure of Jesus. So did the Italian artist who, in His Last Supper, made the chalice on the table finer than the face of the Lord who hallowed it. So does the theologian who fascinates by his metaphysics, or the preacher who charms by his rhetoric, while Christ is but dimly outlined.

Worship itself may hinder the true apprehension of Christ. A liturgy is a fine thing if it leads to Christ, and a bad thing if it draws the mind away from Him. Symbolism is excellent if it distinguishes Christ, and execrable if it extinguishes Him. It is absurd to be agitated over the correct color for an altar cloth, if that ornament conceals Christ. A bare table would be vastly better if He

could thus be more clearly seen. There is no serious objection to the burning of incense if the fragrant cloud does not obscure Christ. You can tinkle bells, and sprinkle consecrated water, and adorn yourself with ecclesiastical millinery, and exercise yourself with mysterious genuflections, so long as you do not forget Christ. He must always occupy the center of your stage. He must always sit at the head of your table. He must always be the presiding genius of your ceremonies. He it is for whom the world waits.

In the Church of Notre Dame in Paris they show you the coronation robes of Napoleon Bonaparte. You are held off at a reverential distance to admire the gold and ermine. But you are all the while thinking of the man who wore those garments, and made them great. You would give far more than the paltry gratuity you hand the custodian of those clothes if he would introduce you to the masterful mind that rendered those tawdry rags glorious, and the will that dared to crown his own head with the authority of an empire. So it is the Christ, and not the swaddling clothes of ceremonialism, that the world longs to behold. Our ministry is weak in proportion as it obscures Christ. It is effective in the measure with which it brings Him into open view. "The world is gone after Him."

## XXV.

# THE QUEST OF THE GREEKS.

## CHAPTER XII. 20-36.

When we consider how obscure was the corner in which St. John was born and how humble the calling to which he was bred, we can not but wonder that it should have been given to him to write books which have already lasted for nearly two thousand years, and yet appear to have only commenced their career of usefulness.

—*Stalker.*

THE scene is probably the Court of the Gentiles, in the Temple at Jerusalem. The time is uncertain, being either Wednesday evening or Thursday morning. This is the only incident which John records between the Triumphal Entry and the events which occurred on the evening of the Last Supper. This episode is not mentioned in the Synoptics. The days between Sunday and Thursday were crowded with events, according to the other evangelists, but this one which the others omit is inserted by John because it fits into his purpose. It not only marks the closing of Christ's public ministry, but it exhibits a foreshadowing of His passion.

### I. THE PETITION (20-22).

The petitioners are Greek proselytes—not Jews who speak Greek, but men of Greek birth, who have embraced the Hebrew religion. They have come to worship at the Feast of the Passover. Perhaps they have witnessed the Triumphal Entry, or the expulsion of the traders from the Temple, and are anxious to have a closer knowledge of the wonderful person involved in these deeds. It has been suggested that the tradition of the embassy of

Abgarus of Edessa, who is said to have invited Jesus to return to his country, may have been founded on this occurrence. It is not impossible that the Greeks in this story actually intended to ask Jesus to visit their region. In any case they desired an interview with Him; they wished to lay their thoughts before Him. There may have been a deep spiritual purpose in their solicitude. "Sir, we would see Jesus," they say to Philip, giving to the disciple the deference which the Master merits. They probably appeal to Philip because his name is Greek, as is also that of Andrew, to whom he carries their message. As these two came from Bethsaida, if the Greeks were of that region, say Decapolis, local reasons may have induced them to apply to Philip, who, not wishing to assume the entire responsibility, gives Andrew an opportunity to exhibit anew his characteristic function of introducing them to Jesus. Compare i, 41; vi, 8, 9.

## II. THE RESPONSE (23-33).

What Jesus is reported by John as saying on this occasion is not specifically directed to the Greeks, though it is unlike Jesus to ignore honest inquiry. Their petition made a deep impression on the mind of Christ, and He gave utterance to solemn thoughts which may have been heard by these Greeks as well as by the disciples and others who were near Him.

1. **The Address (23-26).** The coming of the Greeks at the close of Christ's public ministry, like the coming of the Magi at the time of His birth, brings the Gentile world into our Lord's view. The consciousness of His relation to this world has been more or less obscure until now. "The hour is come"—the fatal hour—"that the Son of man should be glorified." It has come not only to Him, but to the world at large, and to the Jews in particular. He sees Himself in the future exerting His sovereignty over a wide spiritual domain. But to enter into this realm He must pass out of His present sphere. Death is the means by which this will be accomplished. The

cross throws its shadow upon His pathway. But this is in accordance with the great principle, that the nobler life can only be attained by the loss of that which precedes it. This He illustrates by the corn of wheat which must fall into the ground and perish before it can produce fruitage (24). This principle He applies to Himself, and then makes it the governing test of discipleship (25, 26).

2. **The Soliloquy (27, 28).** The hearers are for the moment apparently forgotten as Christ falls into profound reflection upon the crisis which now confronts Him. His prayer suggests the agony of Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi, 39). There is the conflict of nature in the prospect of death with the great motive which has actuated His whole life. Shall He pray to be delivered from this awful trial? Nay, for this purpose He came to this hour. He will pray, "Father, glorify Thy name." Thus, while John omits the agony in the garden, which the Synoptists relate. He gives us to see by this agitation in the soul of Jesus that the agony was a part of His whole life.
3. **The Heavenly Voice (28, 29).** The soliloquy of Jesus is interrupted by a response from heaven. At the close of Christ's public ministry the Father seals His mission by this audible authentication, as had been done at His baptism and at the transfiguration. Those who hear it report it according to the degree of their spiritual intelligence. To some it is an inarticulate sound like that of thunder, to others the undistinguishable message of an angel.
4. **The Address Resumed (30-33).** Jesus affirms that He did not need this voice for His encouragement, since He has resources of strength and comfort within Himself; it was given for them. The hour of judgment had come for the world. The prince of the world would now suffer defeat. The approaching cross would not only be a judgment of the world's iniquity, but also a sign of Satan's de-

feat. He would no longer attract men by His words and works merely; He would draw them to Him from every quarter of the world by His sacrifice on Calvary. His death would accomplish what His life could never attain.

### III. THE WARNING (34-36).

The people who have heard these impressive words now ask a question. Jesus has applied the title Son of man to Himself in such relations that they can not doubt He means thereby to designate the Messiah. How does He reconcile this with the teaching of the law, by which they mean the Old Testament generally, which affirms that the Christ shall abide forever? Who is this Son of man? They do not see that their interpretation of the Scriptures may be at fault. A suffering and perishing Messiah is not desired by them.

Jesus makes no direct reply to their ignorant or contemptuous question, but warns them that this is the decisive hour for them. While they have the light, let them walk in it. The darkness will come when the Christ is withdrawn. This prophetic word has been fulfilled. In the apostolic period a few of their number accepted the gospel, but the nation declined from the truth, and the light was removed to the Gentiles. "While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light"—this is Christ's last warning to His generation.



### The Center of Gravity.

*"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."*—JOHN xii, 32.

When the coronation ceremonies of Rudolph of Hapsburgh were in progress it was discovered that in the hurry no scepter had been provided. Thereupon the king seized a crucifix and exclaimed, "This shall be my scepter!" From the days of the Apostle Paul until now it has been the policy of successful preachers of the gospel to make the Cross the scepter of their authority, and they have found that, like the rod which Moses carried, it has always been their most effective instrument when marvels were to be wrought. "We preach Christ crucified," is the watchword of the triumphant evangelist in every generation. At the opening of one of his campaigns in England, Dwight L. Moody invited the London clergy to meet him in Freemason's Hall. Various questions were propounded, and among others he was asked, "Would it not be well for you to print your views of the Gospel, that we might know them?" He replied, "They are already in print; you will find them in the fifty-third of Isaiah." The doctrine of sacrifice foreshadowed in this message of the Prophet-Evangelist, and embodied in the atoning death of Jesus Christ, must ever be the central theme of Christian preaching, both because it lies at the very heart of the gospel, and also because it is the most persuasive theme which can be employed to influence the souls of men toward the Savior of mankind.



A theory of the atonement entirely satisfactory to every mind is probably impossible of construction, but the power of Christ's sacrifice to win men to His standard will be understood by the humblest intelligences. In the establishment of His spiritual sovereignty over humanity, it was necessary that He should possess extraordinary elements of attractiveness. This has always

been an indispensable requisite for successful leadership in any field, and has been strikingly exemplified in the lives of military captains.

It was remarked of the Duke of Wellington, as also of other great soldiers, that his presence on a field of battle was equivalent to the addition of many regiments. The general who had never lost a contest was certain to be an inspiring figure whenever he appeared among his troops. What a tribute to the personal charm of Napoleon Bonaparte is found in the fact that when he escaped from Elba, whither he had been exiled after his first abdication, he had no sooner landed at Cannes with a mere handful of men, and was known to be proceeding toward Paris, than he was joined by great companies of his old soldiers, who quickly forgot their allegiance to the king in their idolatrous affection for their former master. Whole battalions passed over to his side the moment they caught sight of his familiar face and figure, and enabled him in a few days to enter the capital and assume control of the army once more. Doubtless the attractiveness of such a personality is due to the appeal which he makes to the love of valor and the passion for conquest which dwell in the bosoms of men. While Jesus was not to be the captain of a carnal force, He was to lead men to the noblest triumphs of all time, and to qualify Him for this high calling it was of the largest importance that He be able to command the attention and compel the admiration of those who love heroism. A philosopher or a teacher could not have gained such a place in the affections of men by pursuing the peaceful habits common to a quiet vocation. His influence would have been confined to the scholarly and the thoughtful. The throng would have passed Him by as unsuited to their needs. But the sacrificial element in the life of Jesus arrests the interest of all men.



Suffering provides the opportunity for such an exhibition of heroism as invariably evokes the admiration of the world, despite the selfishness which so widely per-

vades the race. It has been remarked that the history of nations is only most attractive when it depicts trial and struggle. Prosperity affords no medium for stirring recital. The disasters which overthrew Babylon, Nineveh, Greece, and Rome invest their stories with a solemn grandeur which captivates the imagination of all readers. The brave resistance which the Netherlands offered to the pitiless cruelty of Philip II of Spain makes the narrative of her people's development vastly more interesting than the records of a mercantile nation attaining unparalleled wealth through undisturbed avenues of trade.

In the same way the biographies of individuals are effective with the average mind in proportion to the tragic features which they contain. Thousands of persons who could not repeat a single moral precept or philosophical observation of Socrates are thoroughly acquainted with the circumstances of his death, and have wept tears of pity as in imagination they have witnessed him drinking the cup of poison in his prison, and bidding a long farewell to his companions. It is altogether probable that the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables of the New Testament would possess a much smaller interest for the majority of mankind if they had not been spoken by one who gave His life in support of His teaching. We may reverently suppose that Jesus welcomed His cross with joy as He foresaw the impression which the spectacle of His sublime sacrifice would make upon even degraded and profligate men. It was the master-stroke of Divine wisdom. If that could fail to break the stony hearts of impenitent men, nothing which the human mind can conceive would be capable of doing it. In the light of this fact we may understand the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Perfect in character He was by the very fact of His divine-human nature. Perfect in His ability to draw all men unto Him He could not be without His sacrifice for the weal of humanity.

But the mere fact of suffering is not enough to make a man attractive to his fellows. The criminal wearing out his days in durance vile or expiating his crimes on the gallows commands our pity, but not our respect. The merchant failing through bad ventures or mismanagement awakens our sympathy, but not our admiration. Even voluntary sacrifice may be made for unworthy ends. Empedocles leaping into the mouth of burning *Ætna* to secure enduring fame is not an imposing figure. But when a man for a high purpose, like the salvation of human life, or the defense of a great nation, deliberately consigns himself to hardship and death, his suffering rises to the height of sublimity and makes him a magnet of irresistible attraction. It is such a motive which imparts a certain grandeur of character to even unholy men who risk their lives for the safety of others. A New York policeman was taking a burly ruffian down Broadway to prison. The man's hands were manacled, and he was proceeding quietly, when suddenly he broke away from the officer, and before anything could be done had rescued a child from death under the wheels of a car which was rushing madly down the street. Then he came back to the policeman, and walked submissively on to his place of confinement. The latent goodness of the criminal had a momentary outbreak, and made him a hero for the instant.

The only black man who wears the Victoria Cross, which is given for valor without regard to rank, and is never denied the humblest soldier who has performed a deed worthy of it, is a hero named Gordon, a negro in the West Indies. He was sent to West Africa for one of the petty wars of Great Britain with the barbarous chiefs of that region. As the British forces were marching through the bush one day Gordon saw the barrel of a gun peeping out and covering the body of his commanding officer. He did the only thing by which the officer could be saved—threw his arms around him, and swung him about so as to interpose his own body between the officer and the gun. In a second the bullet sped through Gordon's body, piercing his lungs and stretching him on the earth for dead. But the hero

recovered, and now wears the distinction which titled nobility might well covet. Character is thus glorified by sufferings endured or perils undergone for the sake of others. Christ dies on a cross, that He may lift His enemies as well as His friends out of perdition into paradise, out of sin into holiness, and forthwith He becomes the most dominant personality in the range of history. The artists find His career the most powerful subject upon which to exercise their genius, the writers are forever telling His story in one fashion or another, the musicians have discovered no other theme to compare with Him for inspiration and effectiveness. The blasphemy of His name is esteemed the most hideous profanity that can befoul the lips of man. The Pharisees were scarcely extravagant when they said despondently, "Behold, the world is gone after Him!"



When it becomes evident to men that it is God who is thus suffering in their behalf, the power of Christ to attract them is intensified to the highest degree. Cæsar stabbed in the Capitol will awaken profounder interest than the woes of a hundred regiments of common soldiers. A great ruler dying in his palace occupies more space in the newspapers and more room in public thought than the overthrow of a city. Think of God enduring the buffetings of the mob and the shameful death of the cross! Once let that conception take hold upon the mind and heart, and its grasp will be unrelaxing. We know that Jesus was more than a national hero, killed because of His devotion to principles to which He had committed Himself. We are not moved by any other story of martyrdom as we are stirred by the narrative of His sacrifice. For He gives Himself to the divine task of saving men from sin, that deadly malady which infects the whole race. The tragedy of Calvary is to avert the tragedy of a lost world. If a man throws himself into the river, and imperils his life, saying as he takes the plunge, "I do this to express my love for you!" he impresses me only with his rashness and ineffectiveness. But if when I am being swept to death by the submerging current, I

see him leaping to my rescue, and hear him shouting, "Be of good courage, I will save you!" I need no evidence of his affection other than this, and I hail him as the preserver of my life. It is this which gives Jesus Christ His power over humanity. We know that sin is destroying us, we know that we can not throw off its curse without Divine help. We know that Christ is God manifest in the flesh to save us, and we surrender to His love with glad hearts.

Yet the drawing of the cross is not irresistible. The human will can withstand its magnetism. Man has the sovereign right of choice. It is a frightful responsibility, but he can so insulate himself by worldliness that he will not be sensible of the attraction of Christ. He can remove himself so far away from the love of Christ by willful dedication to sin and shame, that he will no longer gravitate toward God. As there lies a point between this earth and each of the other planets, beyond which the pull of gravity is away from the earth and not toward it, so there is a point far on toward perdition, where the love of Christ no longer constrains men to seek His fellowship, but where men call evil their good, and see no charm in the godly life. But they who desire salvation, when they behold Christ's passion for the deliverance of humanity, cry out with fervent lips,

"Nay, but I yield, I yield;  
I can hold out no more:  
I sink by dying love compelled,  
And own Thee conqueror."



## XXVI.

### THE FINAL JUDGMENT.

#### CHAPTER XII. 36-50.

The relation that John bears to Christ resembles that of Plato to Socrates; he is emphatically the philosophical evangelist. — *Harman*.

#### End of the Public Ministry (36).

HAVING concluded the address given in the preceding passage, Jesus withdraws from public view, and does not reappear, though the people await Him in the temple on the following day (Luke xxi, 38). John does not specify the location of His retreat, though it was probably Bethany. Ample opportunity had been afforded the people for belief, both by the works of Jesus, which they had witnessed, and also by His words, to which they had listened. Though He now hides Himself it is not of His own choice, but through the compulsion of His adversaries. It is their lack of faith which really obscures Him both physically and spiritually. They have turned from the Light, and the Light has vanished. They have lapsed into total moral darkness. Now, at the end of Christ's public ministry, judgment is recorded against these unbelievers, first, in the words of the author of this gospel, and then in the words of Christ Himself.

#### I. THE JUDGMENT OF JOHN (27-43).

1. **Persistent Unbelief (37).** Despite the many miracles Jesus has performed, the Jews reject His claims. Only seven of these "signs" are given in John's narrative, but these are typical of the rest, which He declares in several places, and particularly

at the close of his book (xx, 30; xxi, 25), have been very numerous. The Jews have been compelled to acknowledge that these are true miracles, for they have been wrought "before them"—in their very presence. Nevertheless, though without any excuse to justify their unbelief, they have refused to commit themselves to Christ.

2. **The Cause of Unbelief (38-41).** The fulfillment of prophecy is manifest in their unbelief. Compare Isa. liii, 1. History repeats itself in their present rejection of Christ. As their ancestors repudiated the message of the prophet-evangelist, so they have scouted the revelation of the Messiah Himself. By their persistent unbelief they had rendered themselves incapable of belief. This is described as if it were the result of divine pre-determination (39, 40). As God is the ordainer of the laws under which the forces of life operate, He is in this sense responsible for the evil as well as the good in human conduct. As a matter of fact the moral insensibility of these Jews was due to their own willful unbelief steadily maintained in the face of the most convincing proofs of Christ's divinity. It was the result of that inexorable law by which the continued refusal to obey the dictates of conscience finally renders the conscience impervious to moral appeals. God's announcement that an event will occur does not produce the event. He proclaims it *because* it will occur. Things which are in the future, as reckoned by human calculations, are viewed by Him as already existing. The Jews, therefore, were not doomed to blindness by an arbitrary act of the divine will, irrespective of their characters and right of choice; they were doomed solely on the basis of God's knowledge that they would make the fatal choice. Nevertheless, as the processes of nature are according to laws which God has fixed, it is legitimate to say, "He hath blinded," etc. (40; compare Isa. vi, 9). This explains also the meaning of

the statement often repeated in the book of Exodus, that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and the declaration of Paul regarding the heathen, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Rom. i, 28). Isaiah uttered his judgment against the Jews when he beheld the glory of the Son before His incarnation (Isa. vi, 1). The revelation of the Son in the flesh brought the unbelief of the nation to its predicted consummation.

3. **Exceptions to the General Unbelief (42, 43).** Apparently there were some who believed even among the rulers of the Jews. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus are probable examples. Doubtless there were others who did not show confidence in Jesus to such an extent as these men. Yet they yielded a certain intellectual assent to His claims. They did not, however, openly confess their faith in Him, and hence their belief was fatally defective. They feared excommunication. They were not brave enough to risk the contempt of men for the favor of God. Hence they were in no better condition than those who stoutly avowed their unbelief. (Compare v. 41-44.)

## II. THE JUDGMENT OF JESUS (44-50).

While this passage is phrased in the direct manner characteristic of John, it is hardly probable that Jesus uttered the words which follow as a separate discourse on this particular occasion, for in verse 36 it is plainly indicated that Jesus had ended His public ministry. This is rather a convenient epitome of teachings formerly delivered. In fact, all the thoughts expressed herein may be found in utterances previously delivered by our Lord as recorded in this gospel.

1. **The Believer (44-46).** Belief in the Son is really belief in the Father. This belief is the ground of eternal life. Christ's significance as a person lies in the fact that He is sent by the Father, that He

is the manifestation of the Father. In beholding Him, they behold the Father. In receiving Him they receive the Father. In His light they rejoice in the Divine light. The judgment on the world is that it lieth in darkness. The judgment on believers is that they walk in the light.

2. **The Unbeliever (47-49).** Judgment need not be formally pronounced by Jesus on the unbeliever. He who rejects Christ's message rejects the Father. He is, therefore, self-judged. Jesus did not come into the world to pronounce judgment, but to bring salvation. Nevertheless, His coming results in judgment. The message and mission of Jesus which unbelievers repudiate will stand against them in the last day. It is God's word and work they scorn. They have turned away from Him.
3. **The Ultimatum (50).** Whether men accept or reject God's commandment, it alone brings eternal life. The mission of Christ is the expression of that commandment. Christ asserts this: "Even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak." A final statement of what He has constantly declared.

### The Cause of Unbelief.

*"They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."*—JOHN xii, 43.

When Cassius was seeking to incite Brutus against Julius Cæsar, he is represented by Shakespeare as undertaking to show him that homage to the master of Rome was nothing short of ignoble self-abasement.

"I can not tell what you and other men  
Think of this life; but for my single self  
I had as lief not be, as live to be  
In awe of such a thing as I myself."

This sentiment, apart from the spirit which animated the man who uttered it, is worthy of all acceptance, but it was not shared by certain prominent persons in Christ's day, and is not expressed in the conduct of thousands of people in this generation. John says that, despite the many wonderful works Jesus had wrought before the very eyes of the Jews, "they believed not on Him," that is, the nation as a whole did not receive Him. Nevertheless, there were notable exceptions, for "even among the chief rulers many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." They had a very sensitive regard for the jealous guardians of orthodoxy, and a very serious dread of excommunication. The common people were under the spell of the same deference for authority. Popular opinion took its form and color from the judgments of the Pharisees. If these lordly tyrants of the conscience saw any symptoms of belief in Jesus on the part of the populace, they would instantly crush the budding faith under the threat of persecution. For the people who were victims of this policy of repression one can feel a measure of pity, but for the rulers who timorously yielded to it one must have a kind of scorn, for they ought to have been strong enough to brave the enmity of the Pharisees. But John's

verdict concerning them is true: "They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Doubtless this could also be said with equal propriety of the common people in large numbers, and unfortunately it can be applied to multitudes in our own time, who substitute worldly favor for divine approbation.



It is related of a great financier, one of the Frankfort Rothschilds, that whenever he was in doubt on a matter of business he would turn to his chief clerk and say: "Herr Meyer, pray tell me, what are my principles to-day with regard to American hides?"—or whatever the interest under discussion might chance to be. What a host of souls take their rule of life in this fashion at the hands of others! If they confined themselves to those concerns which affect commercial life alone the result would not be so alarming, but sadly enough they confer with flesh and blood regarding the deeper questions of character, and submit their spiritual convictions to the judgment of the world.

Under such circumstances unbelief is seen to be not a matter of the mind, but of the will. Jesus plainly declared that the evidence of His right to be called the Son of God was so ample that any man who was willing to acknowledge Him as Lord, would find no difficulty in doing so. And John's avowed purpose in writing his gospel was so to mass the testimony of every kind in support of Christ's divinity that the dumbest mind could not escape the conviction that only through faith in Him was eternal life to be secured. Jesus told the influential Jews who were seeking His destruction that their unbelief had a moral and not an intellectual root. "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not. If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" (John v. 42-44.) While they had an itch for human applause it was impossible for them to put a true valu-



ation on the favor of God. If Jesus had come as a leader of conventional religious thought, if He had adjusted Himself to the worldly policy of the Jews, if He had sought to ingratiate Himself into their favor by adopting their carnal program, then He would have been received with enthusiasm. But the pure spirituality He taught was offensive to their tastes. "They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."



Macaulay tells of a rich Brahman who saw a drop of water from the sacred Ganges under the microscope. The revelations thus made to him were so appalling that he bought the instrument and dashed it to atoms, that it might never again rebuke his superstitious practices. It was with a similar motive that these Jews pursued Jesus until they accomplished His death. So long as He remained in their presence He was a perpetual judgment upon their dishonest lives. They could only rid their consciences of the constant reminder of their faithlessness by removing Him from the world. Actuated by this purpose, their moral sense steadily lost its quickening power, and finally their spiritual perceptions were so blunted that they saw no beauty in Him who was the "light of the world." That was character-suicide, and it illustrates a process that is continually going on in society to-day. Men turn aside from Jesus Christ because He apparently opposes their personal interests. He makes a demand upon them which they are not willing to grant. They prefer worldly satisfactions to Christian discipleship, and at length they lose all zest for spiritual religion, and dwindle into moral insensibility.

There exists no formal body of Pharisees in our day to sit in judgment on the religious feelings of the people. In their place, however, and exerting an equally baneful influence, is the spirit of worldliness, which so plainly characterizes the age in which we live. There is no question but that this temper is foreign to the interests of religion. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

An undue deference to public opinion marks those who "love the praise of men more than the praise of God." This is an exhibition of feeble judgment. It supposes that society is wiser than the individuals which compose it. The truth is that people in the mass are generally inferior in understanding and in character to the same persons taken singly. The chemist combines ingredients which are innocuous in themselves into a compound which is deadly in its effect upon the human system. A number of fairly wise people when thrown together become capable of great folly. The mob is a very dangerous thing. Public opinion is often only the speech of the demagogue transferred to the lips of the people. In any case it simply represents average conventional ideas, which frequently occupy a low level of intelligence.

Charles James Fox, the English statesman, would often say, when a public measure was under discussion, "I wonder what Lord B—— will think of this." Now Lord B—— happened to be a very stupid person, and Fox's friends were curious to know why he attached so much importance to the opinion of such an ordinary individual. "His opinion," said Mr. Fox, "is of much more importance than you are aware of. He is an exact representative of all commonplace English prejudices, and what Lord B—— thinks of any measure, the great majority of English people will think of it." It is shrewdness in the politician to heed the popular sentiment in order to serve his own ends, but it is folly in those who desire a rule of conduct to look for it in the dictates of public opinion. The people and their leaders have often been astray, and society would soon drift into hopeless incapacity, if it were not for the benevolent interference of men who think for themselves, and who are at constant variance with public opinion.

To regulate one's religious life by the customs of the world—another species of unwholesome regard for commonplace popular judgment—is the superlative degree of foolishness. The rulers in Christ's day, who were deterred from espousing His cause openly by the fear of Pharisaic enmity, were guilty of this moral weakness;

and those who refrain from an earnest devotion to Christian principles in this age, because they dread the flippant criticism of worldlings, are victims of the same sinful timidity. "They love the praise of men more than the praise of God." They have a higher respect for temporal glory than for eternal riches. The exhortation of St. Paul is the true prescription for such a malady: "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."



Alexander Hamilton is credited with this noble sentiment: "I would willingly risk my life, but not my character, to exalt my station." There are too few persons among us who are inspired by such a lofty principle. An eagerness for personal popularity destroys the sense of relative values in many minds. The youth is ruined in college because he sets a higher estimate on being dubbed a good fellow than on achieving scholarship. He dishonors himself in business by surrendering moral integrity to the aspiration to be considered brilliant and the purpose to become rich. He weighs every action in the scales of self-interest. Demetrius, the silversmith, who saw his business of making shrines for Diana going to pieces under the preaching of the gospel, cried out to his fellow-workmen, "This our craft is in danger to be set at nought!" In a like spirit men to-day often protest that religion must not be allowed to interfere in commerce, and for the sake of temporal success yield their hold upon moral character. In order to secure social eminence or political emoluments others will sacrifice every virtue and stifle every prompting of conscience. "They love the praise of men more than the praise of God." Jesus spoke sage words to His disciples when He said: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets." His admonition is needed now as then, not only for the leaders of religion, but for all who seek the highest good.

In the early years of his public life Franklin Pierce was addicted to habits of dissipation. During this period his career in Washington reflected no credit upon himself or his constituency. But under the influence of a faithful preacher of the gospel, who was at the time chaplain of the House of Representatives, and to whose ministry Franklin Pierce was powerfully attracted, he was brought to see the sinfulness of his life, and to enter upon an earnest religious experience. To the great surprise of every one he soon resigned his seat in the Senate, and retired to private life in Concord, New Hampshire, where for several months he exhibited a most ardent Christian spirit. At length, however, he drifted back into a more easy-going method of living, though he never sank again into the evil practices of former days. His reason for resigning his place in the Senate was the subject of much inquiry, and was never thoroughly understood by his associates; but he declared to a clergyman in Concord that he had withdrawn from political life in order to enter the ministry. Until recently a man was living who had received this story directly from the person to whom Mr. Pierce had divulged his intentions. But the seductions of political preferment were too strong for him, and when the opportunity for national prominence came to him he yielded to the temptation of ambition. When he was nominated for the Presidency thousands of people in all parts of the country asked, "Who is Franklin Pierce?" and when the small impression he made as Chief Magistrate upon the life of the nation is remembered, it will not be thought strange if in future days the same question often rises to the lips of American citizens, "Who was Franklin Pierce?" Had he clung to the purpose conceived in his soul under the impulse of religious enthusiasm, he might have written his name in ineffaceable letters upon the characters of those whom he had won to Christ, and whose lives he had molded into strength and symmetry by the ministry of the truth. "What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world and lose himself?"



PART II  
JOHN XIII-XXI



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To My Daughter



# Studies in the Gospel of John.



## PART II.

THE second main division of John's Gospel begins at the thirteenth chapter. Having presented those facts connected with Christ's public ministry which he deems most suitable for the accomplishment of his purpose as declared in xx, 31, the author now devotes himself to those events and discourses which are associated with the passion of our Lord, to the teaching which immediately precedes it, to the death and resurrection which follow it. He records those self-manifestations of Christ which are made to the inner circle of His disciples after He has formally withdrawn from the world.

In chapter xii John has described some of the closing scenes of Christ's public ministry. One of these—the appearance of Greeks eager to meet Jesus—is given by this evangelist alone. It is an event in which the Master discerns that the final crisis of His life has arrived. "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified." (xii, 23.) He anticipates the dreadful agony of Gethsemane and His ultimate triumph over evil. (xii, 27-31.) He foresees the world coming to Him, drawn by the spiritual power of His cross. (xii, 32, 33.) He concludes His public ministry with a solemn warning to His generation. (xii, 35, 36.) He then retires to the seclusion of His own group of companions until the hour of His arrest, which marks the beginning of the tragedy through which He manifests His glory in suffering and death, to be followed by His resurrection, through which He manifests His glory in triumph over the grave.

## 2      STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

John follows here a true chronological order, dealing first with the scenes which immediately precede the death of Jesus, then with the circumstances which attend His crucifixion, and, finally, with manifestations which occur after the resurrection. These events not only display the glory of Christ with increasing fullness, but also exhibit the process by which the faith of the disciples was developed to its highest attainment during the visible presence of Jesus in the world. The words of Jesus which accompany His works are herein shown to contribute an indispensable element in producing this result. The sad unbelief of the Jewish leaders is at the same time vividly contrasted with the beautiful faith of the disciples. The maturity of this unbelief is evidenced by the murder of the Son of man. The spiritual purpose of the author of this Gospel, as well as his literary skill, is clearly seen in the arrangement and disposition of his subject matter. The second division is followed by an Epilogue or Appendix (chapter xxi) which corresponds to the Prologue or Introduction (i, 1-18) which is prefixed to the first division.

## PART II.

### Manifestation of Christ's Glory Through Works and Words Connected With His Passion.—Chapters XIII-XX.

#### ANALYSIS.

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1. Introduction. (XIII. 1.)
2. Last Works. (XIII. 2-30.)
  - (1) Washing the Disciples' Feet. (XIII. 2-20.)
  - (2) The Detachment of Judas. (XIII. 21-30.)
3. Last Words. (XIII. 31—XVI.)
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  - (9) The Mission of the Holy Spirit. (XV. 26—XVI. 1-15.)
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1. The Appearance at the Sea of Galilee. (XXI. 1-14.)
2. The Final Commission to Peter. (XXI. 15-23.)
3. Concluding Notes. (XXI. 24, 25.)





## SECTION I.

# THE INNER MANIFESTATION BY EXAMPLE AND PRECEPT.

## CHAPTERS XIII-XVII.

It is important to remember that the matter of this entire section, apart from its references to Judas Iscariot, is confined to John's Gospel. These chapters (xiii—xvii) comprise almost one-fourth of the whole work, though they cover in time only a single evening. The preceding twelve chapters extend over a period of about three years. In them John has conducted his readers through the three provinces of Palestine, and into a great diversity of situations. Now he limits his narrative to one place and, perhaps, to a single building. In the previous chapters we have had all kinds of people before us; here we have simply Christ and His disciples.

The characteristics of Christ's teachings in this section correspond to the changed conditions which are represented. In the public ministry of Jesus He manifested Himself to the world, the disciples being witnesses of what He said and did. John has described the effects of these self-disclosures of the Lord upon various sorts of persons, some of whom are moved to belief and others to rank unbelief. He has shown how faith gradually developed in a few hearts, and how the hostility of the official classes increased up to the point of representative national rejection of Jesus. But now the struggle with the public is over, and His open ministry to His disciples is also ended. As He has withdrawn from the multitude, so He will shortly depart from the world. He will be crucified within a few hours, He will pass through the tomb to life under altered relations, and presently

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will ascend "to the majesty on high." Meanwhile, He must give to His disciples instruction suited to their unique situation, capable of sustaining them in His absence, and introducing them to the invisible ministry of His Spirit. This teaching He now imparts under the pressure of deep emotion. His sympathies are awakened to unusual expression. His love runs to those finer, tenderer utterances which are natural to farewell. All that He says and does throbs with passion. Yet He is calm and serene in His demeanor. He is alone with His disciples. It is a sacred time and a hallowed circle, save for the presence of the traitor, the one dark figure who clouds the scene until the moment of His separation.

What is related in this portion of John's book has a quality and significance all its own. Canon Bernard designates it, "the central teaching of Jesus Christ," and says: "The section of the Gospel thus marked off by its historical setting and by the nature of its contents holds not only a distinct but a central place in the teaching of Christ. It has this central character, first, as intervening between the narrative of the manifestation of Christ to the world, and that of His passion and resurrection; secondly, as closing the teaching of Christ in the flesh and foreshowing His teaching in the Spirit." This unexampled record falls into the following divisions:

1. INTRODUCTION. (xiii, 1.)
2. LAST WORKS. (xiii, 2-30.)
  - (1) Washing the Disciples' Feet. (xiii, 2-20.)
  - (2) The Detachments of Judas. (xiii, 21-30.)
3. LAST WORDS. (xiii, 31-xvi.)
  - (1) Preliminary Sayings. (xiii, 31-35.)
  - (2) Separation: Its Necessity and Outcome. (xiii, 36-xiv, 1-4.)
  - (3) Christ and the Father. (xiv, 4-11.)
  - (4) Christ and His Disciples—Power. (xiv, 12-17.)
  - (5) Christ and His Disciples—Personal Manifestation. (xiv, 18-24.)
  - (6) The Beginning of Benediction. (xiv, 25-31.)

- (7) Christ and His Disciples—An Allegory. (xv, 1-11.)
  - (8) Christ's Disciples and the World. (xv, 12-25.)
  - (9) The Mission of the Holy Spirit. (xv, 26—xvi, 1-15.)
  - (10) From Sorrow to Joy. (xvi, 16-24.)
  - (11) The Conclusion. (xvi, 25-33.)
4. THE INTERCESSORY PRAYER. (Chapter xvii.)



## I.

### INTRODUCTION.

#### CHAPTER XIII, I.

When I read John, it always seems to me that I see him before me, reclining at the last supper on the bosom of his Lord, as if an angel held the light for me, and at certain parts would place his arms around me, and whisper something in my ear.—*Claudius*.

JOHN begins his description of the inner revelation of Jesus to His disciples with a sentence beautiful in itself and serviceable as a door of entrance into the most sacred portion of his gospel. Bengel declares that "this verse is a general exordium extending to all that is related in this and the following chapters." Canon Bernard calls it "the Preamble" of this division of the Gospel. Westcott says that it "is an introduction to the whole cycle of teaching that follows (xiii—xvii), as the next two verses introduce the incident of the feet washing." Godet classes it with several other introductions in this document, such as ii, 23-25; iii, 22-24; iv, 1, 2, 43-45; and says that "Each of these preambles is, with relation to the narrative which is to follow, what the Prologue, i, 1-18, is for the whole Gospel, a general glance fitted to give the reader acquaintance with the subject in advance." We can not afford to pass thoughtlessly through this beautiful portal.

The note of time contained in the words, "before the feast of Passover," has always perplexed scholars and has given rise to endless discussion. There is no doubt that the events John is here beginning to recount occurred on Thursday evening. On this the four Gospels agree. The incident of the feet-washing is identified with the occasion of instituting the Lord's Supper, which



took place on "the same night in which He was betrayed," but which John has not inserted in his narrative, probably because it was sufficiently understood by persons who already had in their possession the other Gospels. The sequence of events fixes the time as Thursday evening. But what day of the month was this? The feast of the Passover began on the fourteenth day of the first month, called Nisan (Numbers xxviii, 16, 17), and continued one week. Did the 14th Nisan fall on Thursday this year? If so, Jesus and His disciples were eating the regular paschal meal of the Jews when they were together on that last memorable night. But if Thursday was the 13th Nisan, then Jesus was anticipating the Passover celebration by one day. It seems impossible to determine this question with certainty. If we take the accounts given by the Synoptists alone, we are compelled to say that Jesus was keeping the Passover on Thursday evening. (Matt. xxvi, 2, 17-19; Mark xiv, 14-16; Luke xxii, 7, 11, 13, 15.) But John says the supper occurred "before the feast of the Passover," and there are other notes of time in his subsequent narratives which correspond with this statement. "It seems, on the whole, to be safe to say that, if the two accounts are to be harmonized, it is not St. John who will need to be corrected from the Synoptists, but the Synoptists who will have to be corrected by St. John," says Sanday. Many scholars hold that Jesus was not keeping the ordinary Jewish feast-day, with which the festival week was inaugurated, but was throwing into the supper of the day preceding the characteristics of the Passover, to which He was now attaching new meanings. On the morrow He would be slain, thus becoming the true paschal lamb Himself. In this way the apparently discrepant accounts of the Synoptists and of John have a certain form of reconciliation. The question of the exact date is an interesting one, but it does not materially affect the interpretation of the spiritual truths taught on the occasion, in whatever way it be determined.

This is generally agreed to have been the third Passover during the ministry of Jesus, though some scholars

hold that the undesignated feast in chapter v, 1, was the Passover, in which case an additional year must be reckoned for the public life of our Lord. However, the evidence seems clearly against this. According to John's account, the first Passover was marked by the cleansing of the temple and the working of many miracles. (ii, 13-23.) The second is indicated as one which Jesus did not attend (vi, 4). the murderous intentions of the Jews having determined Him to confine His ministry temporarily to Galilee. (vii, 1.) The final Passover signalizes the close of His life. He is in Jerusalem to offer Himself, in obedience to the will of His Father, as the true sacrifice, fulfilling and enriching the types of the ancient religion.

In the sentence with which John opens the second part of his Gospel he draws the veil away from the shrine of Christ's inmost thought, and points (1) to the fact that Jesus is perfectly conscious of the crisis which has been reached in his life, and (2) to the intense love for His disciples which absorbs Him notwithstanding the suffering which He must immediately undergo.

### I. THE CRISIS APPREHENDED.

He "knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father." The tokens of the approaching culmination of His ministry were unmistakable. The hostility of the Jews had increased with each fresh evidence of His power over the hearts of the people. He was cognizant of the plot which had been formed for His destruction. He was aware that the traitor in His own company had arranged the details of His deliverance to His enemies. Before another night had passed He would be in His tomb. "His hour was come." This He knew, not simply as a result of calculation, but by an inner revelation. The Father with whom He held such intimate converse had given Him the final word. The cross was in the immediate foreground of His thought.

In many places throughout John's Gospel it is implied that the career of Jesus is determined, and the

crises of His life controlled, by the foreordination of God. At Cana He says, "Mine hour is not yet come." (ii, 4.) He urges the same reason for His refusal to go up to the Feast of the Tabernacles. (vii, 6, 8.) Twice it was said of Him that "no man laid hands on Him because His hour was not yet come." (vii, 30; viii, 20.) When the fullness of time had come for any crisis in His life He was conscious of it. "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified." (xii, 23.) "Father, the hour is come." (xvii, 1.) In every instance the precise moment has been determined beforehand and has been appointed to serve a definite purpose of the divine will. Here Jesus realizes the consequences of "His hour," and looks beyond the present to the results of His departure.

He knew that He was leaving the world to go to His Father. The antithesis of the terms "the world" and "Father" is marked. Jesus is passing from the earthly to the heavenly world. He has in full view the meaning of this translation. The hour is fraught with eternal significance.

## II. THE LOVE MANIFESTED.

"Since" or "because" He knew that His hour was come, His love expresses itself without measure. In prospect of separation from the objects of their affection persons often become more than ordinarily tender and demonstrative. The love which had been constant from the hour He chose these disciples not only persisted despite the Master's personal sufferings, but now actually reached its highest intensity because of the inevitable separation which He knew would accompany those sufferings. The words translated "unto the end" may also be rendered "to the uttermost." Ideas of time and degree are alike contained in the expression.

The love of Christ is here designated in the original by a word which "denotes a calm, discriminating attachment, which loves because of the excellence of the loved object; the affection which is based on esteem, as of friends."—*Plummer*. There is motive and purpose in it.

The other word for love used in the New Testament is more emotional and impulsive, and therefore not so well adapted to the lofty passion of our Lord. (For shades of meaning in the Greek words *agapao* and *phileo*, which can not be distinguished by corresponding terms in the English tongue, see *Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament*.)

"His own" are here to be contrasted with those who "received Him not." (i, 11.) The latter were His own by the ties of nature, the former are His own by spiritual fellowship. They have been given to Him by the Father. They have been drawn to Him by love. They are precious to Him in themselves and in their position as representatives of the millions yet to be brought to Him. (vi, 37, 39; xvii, 11.)

They are to be left in the unfriendly world, in the midst of troubles innumerable; while He is to depart unto the Father, to the world from which distress is banished. His solicitude for their welfare intensifies the expression of His love for them and interprets His remaining deeds and words in prospect of His speedy removal from their company. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end," or "to the uttermost."

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### Love Triumphant.

*Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.*

—JOHN xiii, 1.

That is as fine a thing as could be said about Jesus as a man. If He had remained in His tomb, no better epitaph could have been invented for Him. It tells in a single sentence the magnitude of His character. We must not forget that only a great being can be possessed of a great passion. A small lake can be lashed

into fury by the winds, but the storm king is only sublime when he sweeps the billows of the mighty ocean. So men are impressive when they are in the ferment of a small excitement, but they are only truly great when they are dominated and swayed by a supreme conviction. Some of the strongest men in the world have just missed grandeur by the lack of an absorbing affection. Napoleon Bonaparte was a portentous figure; he might have been truly great if he had learned to love any one better than himself. Jonathan Swift had superb intellectual powers; had he known the depth of a sincere affection he might have been truly magnificent. Abraham Lincoln is in many respects the greatest figure in American history; but his statesmanship, his intellectual acumen, his military genius could never have placed him on the eminence he occupies in the world's esteem if he had not been mastered by a passion for humanity. The characteristic of Jesus which places the crown of highest nobility upon His brow is that He loved, and that He loved to the end—loved to the uttermost. That filled His life, that glorified His death.

It requires a great man to appreciate and understand a great affection. John reveals the magnitude of his character by the fact that he could perceive and apprehend the love of Jesus. A man of small proportions could not have understood it. The earth, the sea, and the sky do not appear the same to all men. The nobility of nature is a closed book to some eyes. Poetry, music, and art are only appreciated by souls sensitive enough to interpret their messages. Multitudes of human beings fail to discern their meaning. Spiritual beauty is in the same way apprehended alone by the spiritually intelligent. John saw the love of Jesus with clearer eyes than any other disciple, and celebrated it in language more warm and vital than any other. By so much he was personally greater than any. The modern disciples of Jesus will attain nobility of proportions in so far as they can estimate, feel, and express the love of Jesus.



This great love survived the most difficult tests. It is by this fact we discover its greatness. It endured the infirmities of the disciples. In the light of our knowledge, these men seem very dull of apprehension concerning the clear teachings of Jesus. From our point of view they were exceedingly slow to appreciate Him. By our standards of measuring character they seem to have been very weak men. They certainly showed disgraceful inconstancy. One of them betrayed Him; another denied Him, and all forsook Him and fled. The frankness with which their infirmities are described compels our respect for the New Testament writers, while it diminishes our regard for the timorous and obtuse disciples. But despite their infirmities, of which He was more painfully aware than any other could be, Jesus loved them to the end—to the uttermost. It is one of the mysteries of love that when it is requited it overlooks all defects in the object on which affection is lavished. Jesus loved these men because they responded to His affection despite the glaring defects of their characters.

His love persisted in the sternest crisis of His life, when it would not have been accounted strange if He had forgotten His attachment to them in the trouble which overwhelmed Him. Within twenty-four hours of His death, when His mind was pervaded with the most painful anticipations, when the thick shadows were gathering about His pathway and the cross reared its dreadful figure out of the gloom of the night, it is said, "He loved His own to the uttermost." No man could be justly condemned for concerning himself with his own interests in the prospect of almost immediate death. Under such circumstances, hardy seamen have forgotten their obligations to those entrusted to their care, brave soldiers have been stampeded into unworthy flight, mothers have forgotten their duty to their children, and strong men have turned with indifference from claims of the highest responsibilities. If Jesus in such a situation had silently pondered the issues just before Him and given no emphatic token of His deep passion for

His disciples, it could not have been regarded as an act of weakness or impropriety; for though He knew He would emerge from His trial triumphant over death, He also realized that preceding His victory He must undergo the most excruciating agony possible to a human soul. Yet He who could not banish these terrible expectations from His mind gave Himself up in His last fleeting hours to acts and words evidencing a deathless love. "He loved them unto the end"—"unto the uttermost."



The reason given for the persistence of His affection is that those were "His own" to whom He was thus devoted. It is incredible that He did not love all who were in the world, but He loved His own in a deeper sense than can be predicated of any others. Distinctions in love are apparent to every thoughtful person. All love is of God, as all light is of the sun; yet as there is an appreciable difference between light which emanates from the combustion of oil, coal, gas, and electricity, so there is an appreciable difference between the love one feels for country, for home, for children, for God. Jesus loved every creature, but these disciples He loved in a fashion belonging to them alone. They were "His own." It is said that "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." Such ceased to be His own, but these disciples received Him. They were actually His own. All children are lovable to the lover of children, but no child is so lovable as one's own. All homes are beautiful, but no home is so beautiful as one's own. All souls are dear to Christ, but none so precious as those He calls His own by a spiritual affinity. Jesus is a unique personality. It has often been said that He can not be classified. It is impossible to think of Him in domestic relations exactly like our own. He must needs be a child, but He could not be a father. He could be a brother, but not a husband. The Church is His bride. But all the love of an undivided heart He gave to His disciples. He said, "Whosoever doeth the will of God,



the same is My brother, My sister, and My mother." He referred to these disciples as "the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world." These men responded to Him. They felt His love and yielded themselves to it, and they were to come out into the world to express His love to others. They were the men on whom He depended. These He loved to the uttermost.

"Which were in the world" is a modifying phrase serving to explain the intense fervor of His love at this closing period of His life. He was departing unto the Father; they were to remain in the world. He saw the conflict which would be inevitable to them, the trials through which they would be called to pass, the evils which would beset them on every hand; and this intensified the feeling of His affection for them.

When William the Silent was struck down by his assassin and realized that his life was now quickly to terminate, he exclaimed, "O, my God, have mercy upon these poor people!" In the very moment of death he saw with swift vision the perils which would now encompass the brave Netherlanders, and with his latest breath implored the pity of God for his compatriots. So Jesus anticipated the terrible persecutions of His followers and the severity of the afflictions which would fall to their fortune because they bore His name, and this fact brought His love to its highest point of expression. "He loved them to the uttermost."

By our fellowship with the Christian Church, by our participation in the sacred institution of the Lord's Supper, by our common interest in the atonement of Jesus Christ, we, who profess and call ourselves Christians, are "His own which are in the world." His apostles have gone, but we remain. Our infirmities are great. We seem to the world scarcely better than those who do not confess the name of Christ, but we are His, and, despite our shortcomings, He persists in a deep affection for us. That passion will be triumphant in our behalf. One may sometimes hesitate to believe in the perseverance of the saints, so evident is their slackness and their dullness, but he is compelled to believe in the perseverance

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of Christ. Every disciple who is capable of being saved, He will save. He is pledged to all who will trust Him. The more He sees their need, the more He will pity and love them. He will love to the end—to the uttermost—and the expression of that love will strengthen “His own” and nourish them unto eternal life.

## II.

### WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET.

#### CHAPTER XIII, 2-20.

The symbol we take to represent Christianity is the cross of Christ. Another symbol that Jesus Christ gave to represent Christianity is a basin and a towel. They belong together. If you are not wearing that symbol, do not wear a cross.—*Alexander McKenzie.*

THIS beautiful episode has been called "a parable in action." It occurred on the evening preceding the death of Jesus, and just a little in advance of the institution of the Holy Eucharist. The exhibition of sacrifice which it contains harmonizes with one phase of that sacrament. Verses 2 and 3 of the narrative serve as an introduction to the event, as verse 1 does for the entire section which follows.

The phrase, "supper being ended," in the Authorized Version is an unfortunate and incorrect rendering. "During supper" is almost as unsatisfactory. "Supper being served" and "when supper was at hand" have been suggested, the latter seeming better suited to the historical circumstances.

Satanic subtlety had already debauched Judas into infidelity. The thought of betraying Jesus was instigated by the devil, but the will to do it belonged to the traitor. The words indicate that his purpose had been conceived in advance of the occasion.

Jesus was thoroughly conscious of being master of the whole situation. The Father "had given all things into His hands." Though He seemed to be the victim of hatred and duplicity, He was actually in control of events. He was yielding Himself to sacrifice, but He knew "that He was come from God, and went to God."

Plummer quotes in this connection St. Bernard's beautiful words: "He came forth from God without leaving Him; and He goeth to God without deserting us." He was sublimely aware of His divine dignity, and this impelled Him to perform the deed which follows as an authoritative example. (Eph. i, 22; Phil. ii, 6-11.)

The theme divides itself into two parts: 1. The Action. 2. The Interpretation.

### I. THE ACTION. (3-11.)

While there is nothing in John's account to indicate the immediate occasion of this object-lesson, and Westcott appears to think it bore no close relation to anything occurring at that particular time, most commentators connect it with the "strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." (Luke xxii, 24.) Luke appears to place this contention after the supper, but as he does not speak definitely of the time, there is no necessary discrepancy in the two records. Certainly strife after the supper would be most unlikely. Jesus had formerly given a similar illustration to His disciples of the humility which He insisted was essential to participation in His kingdom (Luke ix, 46-48), caused by the same bickering about place. Jesus had probably already taken His position at the table. Then a dispute arose as to who should be next to the Master. Edersheim holds that Judas claimed and probably obtained the place of honor. It would appear from subsequent items in the account that he was next to Christ on one side. Absorbed by their rivalry, and in no spirit for condescending service, each disciple had shuffled into his place without once thinking of proffering a courtesy quite indispensable to comfort in an Oriental land. No servant was at hand to bathe the feet of the company, though the pitcher and the basin and the towel were ready in the guest chamber provided for the evening meal. Jesus had once reproved a Pharisee for neglecting to bestow this attention upon Him. "Thou gavest Me no water for My feet." (Luke vii, 44.) Now He administers a silent

rebuke that must have filled every heart with shame. He rises, lays aside His upper garments, leaving only the tunic—a slave's clothing—and having girded Himself with a towel, He pours out water and begins to wash the feet of His disciples. In this way He makes obvious His utter devotion to the men whom He has been instructing.

It is impossible to determine with whom Jesus began. Judas has been suggested, also Peter; but it is not important. Peter's amazement at Christ's self-abasement is natural enough in any case. "Dost *Thou* wash *my* feet?" The outburst reveals a generous appreciation of Christ's self-effacing love and an earnest deprecation of such humiliation for his Lord. With reverence there is coupled a kind of forwardness which is characteristic of Peter. He is always ready to advise his Master. But Jesus gently insists, and says: "What I do thou knowest not now"—you do not take it in—"but thou shalt know hereafter"—come to understand it. He would have some intimation of it in the explanation Jesus would presently give. He would acquire a fuller knowledge of it when Jesus had been glorified.

Peter is perhaps emboldened by the gentleness of Jesus. "Thou shalt never"—not while eternity lasts—"wash my feet." He thinks he can forecast the future. He knows all that is beyond. Nothing can ever occur to change his attitude toward Jesus. He has the same idea in verse 37, where he protests his willingness to die for his Master. Evidently he did not understand himself. There is something admirable in his spirit, something of chivalry in his manner. Nevertheless, he is grievously at fault. He has not yet caught the meaning of humility. When Jesus says, "If I wash thee not," by which He signifies something deeper than mere physical bathing—"thou hast no part with Me," Peter falls into a further excess of feeling through lack of serious thought. By these words Jesus teaches him that to refuse the Savior's self-denying act is not generosity, but arrogance, a lesson which every sinner must learn before he can profit from Christ's sacrifice. Then Peter

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rushes once more ahead of Christ's precept, and exclaims, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." It is an impulsive surrender, which will not be hemmed in by details. Having now some conception of the spiritual significance of Christ's words, he eagerly calls for all that Christ has to give. Even here he misses the real point in the exuberance of his emotions. Jesus has a still finer teaching to impart. He uses a figure which is most effective. A man who has been bathed needs only that the stains of travel be removed. In other respects he is clean. So those who have been cleansed by the truth need not a repetition of the act of grace by which they were purified. If they become soiled by contact with sins, they will require these to be pardoned and again they will become clean. "His love for his Master proves that he had bathed; his boastfulness (37), his attack on Malchus (xviii, 10), his denials (25, 27), his dissimulation at Antioch (Gal. ii), all show how often he had need to wash his feet."—*Plummer*. These disciples were good men at heart, but they needed cleansing now from the contentious spirit which they had been displaying. Jesus said later that they were "clean through the word" which He had spoken unto them.

There was one exception to this statement. As a body they were clean, but one foul spot appeared. They had not yet realized this, but Jesus was fully aware of it. "He knew who should betray Him." Judas also knew. Jesus makes this final reach for his conscience. There is still the possibility of penitence. The Master thus shows His disciples that He is not the dupe of a traitor. He is awake to the fact of treachery. By predicting the betrayal He confirms the faith of the disciples in later years. Compare verse 19.

### II. THE INTERPRETATION. (12-20.)

Upon resuming His place at the table, Jesus proceeds to interpret this "parable in action." While it has been in process He has given His disciples very profound teaching, following Peter's mistaken protest



against Christ's self-humiliation. Now He will explain the meaning of His act as it applies to service. "Know ye what I have done unto you?" He has already promised Peter that he shall come to a fuller realization of what he has just seen. Here the larger illumination begins. "Ye call Me Lord and Master and ye say well, for so I am." Then He proceeds to lay upon them in words which can not be misunderstood the obligation to emulate His example. (13-16.) There was plainly need that their dreams of power and authority in connection with the kingdom which Jesus had come to establish should be corrected. They required the admonition that the spirit of this feet-washing should be exemplified in lives of service. The identical act was not demanded of them unless conditions were appropriate. What would be seemly in Oriental countries becomes abnormal in other climes. The teachings of Jesus are of universal application. The precise acts of Jesus are not to be imitated unless the spirit which actuated them is present.

The principle of social service for humanity is thus illustrated and interpreted. Jesus had already enunciated this in language perhaps too profound for His disciples fully to apprehend. (xii, 24-26.) He had applied the principle in the figure of the grain of wheat. He is its noblest exemplification. But all true followers keep the same law. One loses his life in order to find it. The greater the sacrifice the larger the return. The service of Christ is in proportion to the greatness of His person.

Blessing is pronounced on these disciples if they actualize the truth which their Lord has given them. To put the ideals of Christian service into practice is to assume the very position of the Lord Himself. No greater honor can be acquired, and no richer benefit can be conferred upon the world than to serve it as Christ would.

But there is one who, though he knows, will not do. For him there is not blessing, but blame. Jesus knows him accurately. The traitor eats His bread and yet strikes at Him, violently profaning the sacred claims of hospitality. What depths of sacrilege, if Judas actually



partook of the Eucharist! At this moment he was on the point of kicking his Lord. This shows how the Scriptures are fulfilled. (Psa. xli, 9—a free quotation.) The forecasting of the betrayal will subsequently recur to the minds of the disciples and they will believe their Lord with deepened convictions.

It is not only true that the servant is not greater than his Lord, but also that he represents his Lord, and is to be honored as the Lord. (20.) One failure in the twelve does not invalidate the rights of the faithful to be heard in Christ's stead. The unworthiness of the minister can not nullify the worthiness of the mission.

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### The Luminous Example.

*Know ye what I have done to you?  
If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*  
—JOHN xiii, 12, 17.

"Well, I do not see that she is much superior to other women," said a tourist to a clergyman, who stood absorbed in admiration before the Sistine Madonna in the Dresden Gallery. Afterward, in relating the incident, the clergyman said: "I made no reply, much less did I think of arguing the matter with him, for why should I attempt to prove beauty to a man on whom the Sistine Madonna had failed?"

If the scene which forms the background of our present meditation does not instantly captivate our admiration, no amount of study can convince us of its grace. Perhaps it was impossible for those who witnessed the loving humility of Jesus, as He went about washing the feet of His disciples on the night before His death, to appreciate the superlative beauty of that act. Their mood was not suited to it, and their personal relation to it hindered them from adequately realizing it. But we who have a clearer conception of Christ's dignity than they possessed can not fail to perceive the loveliness of this divine exhibition. Otherwise we must

be blind to spiritual beauty of the noblest order, for this scene depicts self-effacing love with such graphic force that only moral obtuseness can escape its charm.

The wonder of it grows in our thought when we consider who it was that gave this exhibition of loving humility, and who they were upon whom He thus lavished His devotion. With a most effective touch John shows how conscious Jesus was of His own greatness. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God," girded Himself with a towel and began to wash His disciples' feet. Though He undertook the task of a menial, He was fully conscious of His divine dignity. The fact of His fellowship with the Father from all eternity was clearly in His mind, and His expectation to return to the heavenly courts possessed His spirit. It was the knowledge of His divine authority that impelled Him to entail upon His disciples the obligation to follow His example of humility.

Caligula, the Roman emperor, drunk with insolence and shamelessness, desirous of humiliating the members of his Senate, under the pretense of awarding them honor, subjected them to the deepest abasement. Suetonius tells us that "some who had borne the highest offices in government he suffered to run by his litter in their togas for several miles, to attend him at supper, sometimes at the head of his couch, sometimes at his feet with napkins."

How marked is the contrast between the arrogance of this sensual monarch and the humility of the kingliest man the world has ever known. Jesus constrains no one to pay deference to Him, but humbly proffers His services in the performance of an obligation which in Oriental countries belonged to slaves. The wonder increases as we reflect that Jesus not only was fully conscious of His own greatness, but also perfectly understood the character of the men on whom He bestowed such loving attentions. Their weaknesses and their waywardness were alike unveiled to Him. He knew that in the approaching crisis all would forsake Him and flee,

and that one of them would deny fellowship with Him, and one would basely betray Him. Think of Jesus washing the feet of Judas Iscariot!

Peter's protest is not surprising in view of the knowledge he had of the demerits of himself and his associates. If there was none of them who would perform this lowly service for the rest of the company, surely Jesus, their Master, ought not to be permitted to do it for them. "Thou shalt never wash my feet" was an outburst of generous deprecation of the ignominy which would be heaped upon Christ if He were suffered to exercise the functions of a servant.

In the Tate Gallery in London there is a canvas by Ford Madox Brown entitled, "Christ Washing St. Peter's Feet," in which the artist has caught the probable emotions of the impulsive disciple with remarkable fidelity. His head is slightly bowed, and he looks upon the act of Jesus with the expression of one who would shrink from allowing an indignity to his dearest friend. His brows are knitted, as though he were deeply puzzled by the Master's insistence, yet he dares not refuse His proffered service, for Jesus has told him, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." That is a lesson needful to learn but difficult of apprehension. Peter must humble himself to the point of accepting a lowly service from his Lord before he can receive personal benefit from his Savior. That is a fact which every sinner must realize before he can obtain the salvation of his soul. If pride will not permit him to yield to Christ's personal solicitude in his behalf, he can not find favor with God.

How wondrously this picture fits into the self-sacrificing life of Jesus! To one who knows the story of His earthly ministry it presents the proof of its genuineness in its very character. It shows the Lord exactly as we know Him to be. "This is an incident," says Canon Bernard, "which can not be taken by itself. The eloquent act and the plain words constitute a final illustration of the mind of Christ and interpret the entire example of His humiliation in the service of man-

kind. They have impressed upon the Church the principles of thought and the spirit of action which are most distinctively Christian, those of which the Gentile never dreamed, and to which the Jew could not reach."



We have in this beautiful story the law of Christian service in concrete form. Jesus doubtless realized that what He had said to His disciples about His kingdom was likely to raise in their minds false ideals of sovereignty. But when they saw their Lord engaging in the humblest service for His disciples they could not be mistaken concerning the method by which they were to attain influence in the world. Visions of thrones and royal splendor which had been raised in their imaginations would now melt away before the conception of kingliness through service. They would see that He is the greatest who is most helpful to others. There is still danger that Christians will mistake the meaning of eminence in the kingdom of God. Titles, dignities, honors, emoluments are not the prizes for which Christian souls should labor. Gentle ministries, merciful deeds, loving service—these are both the duty and the reward of Christian fidelity. "He that serves best is sovereign."

When the Grand Duchess Vladimir equipped and sent a Red Cross train to Manchuria, at the beginning of the Russo-Japanese war, she placed Princess Eleanor, her cousin, in charge of this portable hospital. For sixteen months, or until the close of the war, the princess lived on board this train, spending her time, day and night, attending to the needs of the sick and wounded. Always as close as possible to the scene of actual conflict, frequently she was only saved from capture and destruction by the Red Cross banner. Often the windows of the train were broken by flying bullets. Once one of the cars was put out of service by a large fragment of bursting shell, and from the windows of the train the princess beheld many a furious conflict. To

the stricken soldiers she was known as "Sister Eleanor;" and when she returned at the end of the war she was overwhelmed with expressions of gratitude and affection in St. Petersburg, where she has continued to be an object of universal praise, not only by the imperial household, but by all Russian society. Many are the homes which are indebted to her care in Manchuria for the lives of fathers, husbands, sons, or brothers. There was grander royalty in the service thus rendered by the Princess Eleanor than in all the imperial splendor which attends the progress of a monarch through his dominions.

Jesus makes it very plain that the obligation resting upon His followers is not to repeat the precise act which He proffered on this last night before His death, but to perpetuate the spirit of that deed in every kind of helpful ministry. "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done." This does not require exactly what He did, but does demand the kind of ministry He offered. The distinction may still be observed. In their attempts to emulate the example of Jesus, many of His followers have been betrayed into the exhibition of a spirit quite contrary to the spirit of their Master. When the pope in Rome washes the feet of twelve persons, generally poor old men who receive a small gratuity on the occasion, these representatives being dressed in tunics of white woollen cloth, and the right foot of each being sprinkled with a few drops of water and then washed and kissed by the head of the Church, there is a slavish attempt to perpetuate in a spectacular way the act of Jesus without a corresponding exhibition of the spirit which prompted the Master. Bengel says: "The pope would show a more serious humility by washing the feet of one king than those of twelve poor men." Luther protested against this style of foot-washing as utterly devoid of true humility, and says: "If you wish to wash your neighbor's feet, see that your heart is really humble and help every one in becoming better."

A wealthy young man in one of our great cities noticed that one of the servants of his club was suffering from some pulmonary affliction. Upon inquiry he learned

that the man's life would soon end if he were not given the benefit of the most skillful treatment. He therefore placed in his hands a suitable sum of money and sent him to the Adirondacks for the best attention our modern science could give him. This act was sufficiently beautiful in itself, but it shone with a light truly divine when it was discovered that the young clubman thoroughly disliked the servant whom he had thus favored, and bestowed his beneficence upon him out of pure kindness for an unfortunate person, with whom he had nothing in common but his humanity. This, in a practical way, illustrates what Jesus meant by "washing one another's feet."



"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Here is another jewel on the string of the Beatitudes. Jesus pronounces those blessed who emulate His example. He means that they are not only happy in their own souls from the consciousness of kindness shown, but they are happy in their position before God. In His esteem they amount to much. He said, on another occasion, "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." For he who gives himself to the service of humanity has not only the joy of doing good, but the joy of being like God. Such only are great in the esteem of the Most High. Lowell's tribute to Hood conveys this inspiring thought:

"Here lies a poet. Stranger, if to thee  
His claim to memory be obscure;  
If thou wouldest learn how truly great was he,  
Go ask it of the poor."

To emulate Christ is to suggest Christ. Every time these disciples should hereafter repeat the deed of Jesus, the picture of their Master's self-effacing love would present itself vividly to their minds and remind the persons who received their ministry of Him by whom they were commissioned. Whoever, by any act of lowly



service, brings comfort and encouragement to weary hearts will thereby suggest the sweet influence of Christ's character. It is only thus that many persons are brought to realize the truth of our holy religion.

Epictetus in one of his works relates the story of a person who had found a shipwrecked and almost dying pirate, and taking pity on him had brought him home, given him clothes, and furnished him with all the necessities of life. When the rescuer was reproached for having thus saved a person so desperately wicked, he replied, "I have honored not the man, but humanity in his person." In humanity Jesus sees the reflection of a divine image, however grossly distorted the picture may be, however far from original righteousness the individual may have departed. To minister to the poor is to offer sacrifice to God, and wherever men and women with complete self-abnegation give themselves to the service of humanity they exhibit the spirit, as they show forth the example, of Jesus Christ the Lord.



### III.

## THE DETACHMENT OF JUDAS.

### CHAPTER XIII, 21-30.

The Fourth Gospel gives us an answer to the question, "What think ye of Christ?" Moreover, it maintains that the answer to this question is the dividing line between light and darkness.—*Inge.*

THE necessity of cleansing has been taught the disciples by a symbolic act; it will now be further enforced by the removal of a corrupting influence. The washing of Jesus could not purify the man who had committed himself resolutely to evil. Until this spot in the feast had been purged the Master would be unable to impart His deeper teachings to the disciples.

John omits the institution of the Lord's Supper from his narrative probably because it would be familiar to those who already had the previously published Gospels in their hands. It is impossible to determine precisely at what point in John's record this event should be placed. According to Luke (xxii, 14-23) and Paul (1 Cor. xi, 25), it would appear that the distribution of the bread occurred during the meal, and the giving of the cup after it was concluded. There is nothing in John's narrative to contradict this. The distribution of the bread would, therefore, be made before the departure of Judas, and the giving of the cup after his withdrawal. In this case, we should be justified in placing the distribution of the bread between verses 16 and 17, or between verses 19 and 20; and the giving of the cup after verse 30 or verse 32. Judas would thus have a fractional participation in the ceremony of this sacred institution. The question can not be settled with certainty.

## 32 STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

In the account before us we have: 1. The Announcement of the Betrayal; 2. The Consternation of the Disciples; 3. The Departure of the Traitor.

### I. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BETRAYAL. (21.)

Jesus had already twice referred to the treachery of Judas in the feet-washing incident. (10, 18.) The dreadful thing lay on His Spirit like a pall. When He said, "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me," His thought turned with increased painfulness to the traitor who was still among the twelve. Surely such a man could not be sent as a representative of the Lord. He must be separated from the faithful. The record says that the Master "was troubled in spirit;" not in His *soul*, which, according to the Scripture usage, is the seat of the natural affections, but in His *spirit*, which is the seat of the religious emotions. (Compare xi, 33, 35, 38; xii, 27.) He was not disturbed by the fear of death, the sense of wounded affection, or even pity for the traitor, but by a spiritual horror at the crime which the instrument of Satan was about to perform.

Jesus now testifies distinctly to the treason, which He has hitherto only vaguely intimated, and affirms solemnly that one of the present company will betray Him; His "verily, verily," showing the absolute certainty of the dastardly deed, despite the difficulty which His true disciples will experience in believing it.

### II. THE CONSTERNATION OF THE DISCIPLES. (22-25.)

The disciples were in doubt concerning whom Jesus spake. All but one knew themselves to be innocent until that moment. But could they be liable to commit that terrible sin without being conscious of such an intention? Two of the Synoptists record that the whole company broke out into the exclamation, "Is it I?" (Mark xiv, 19; Luke xxii, 23.) Matthew recalls that even Judas joined the outcry. (xxvi, 25.) He desired either to conceal his purpose or to ascertain if it was really known.

In this emergency Peter is determined to put the

matter to proof. He appeals to John to interrogate the Master. "One of His disciples whom Jesus loved" can only refer to the author of this Gospel. (xix, 26; xxi, 7, 20.) John has sometimes been accused of claiming the pre-eminence for himself, but in this case it is quite the contrary. After the fashion of the age and clime, guests reclined when eating, resting upon the side, with feet extended outward from the table. The left arm was placed on a cushion and supported the head; the right arm was left free for use in eating. If three reclined together, the place of honor was the center, and the second place in point of distinction was on the left, really behind the back of the first. John reclined in the third place to the right of Jesus—that is, with his back to the Master. In this way he "was leaning on the bosom of Jesus." (23.) The Revised Version brings out the meaning more clearly. Who, then, occupied the place of favor? Some say Simon Peter. But he could beckon to John quite as conveniently from a position directly across the table, where Edersheim places him, giving the post of honor, as do several other scholars, to Judas Iscariot. This view seems warranted by the fact that Judas must have been very close to Jesus in order to enable them to converse without being heard by the others. In the moment when the disciples are looking about in amazement to inquire who the miserable offender can be, Peter motions to John, urging him to secure the name of the traitor, evidently supposing that Jesus has whispered it to the beloved disciple. John accedes to his request, just turning his head enough to permit him to proffer the question to Jesus reclining directly behind him.

### III. THE TRAITOR DESIGNATED AND DETACHED. (26-30.)

Jesus names, apparently to John only, the token by which He will mark the traitor. Following an Eastern custom yet in vogue, by which special honor is bestowed upon a guest, Jesus offers Judas a morsel of food dipped in a kind of broth. "As a sign of communion, it was

a last appeal to the conscience of Judas. If in receiving it his heart had broken, he could still have obtained pardon."—*Godet*.

Judas accepts the gift of Jesus, and turns the mark of honor into a confirmation of his wicked purpose. Now he makes the final surrender to evil. He has been dallying with temptation for many months. Henceforth he is the subservient tool of Satan. (Compare Jas. i, 15.) Repentance is now apparently impossible. The case is hopeless. The purpose of Judas is fixed. The treacherous deed will be wrought, not because God has ordained it, but because Judas has determined it. The sooner it is consummated, the earlier will Jesus attain His triumph over death. Therefore He says to the traitor, "What thou doest, do quickly."

So well had Judas concealed his purpose that the other disciples did not even now realize the exact situation, and so quietly had the conversation between Jesus and himself been carried on that they did not understand its import. It is doubtful if even John had overheard the words which hastened Judas from the table. The company fancied that Jesus had sent the treasurer to make provision for the Passover feast, or to render assistance to the poor. If Peter had clearly understood what was occurring, could his impulsive nature have been restrained from violence toward Judas?

The traitor immediately withdraws into the darkness to pursue his nefarious project. The words, "It was night" lay hold upon the imagination. Judas has banished himself not only from the light of that sacred chamber to the shadows of the outer night, but also from the Light of the world to the darkness in which men lose their way eternally because the light of life is not in them. (xi, 10.) The contrast of light and darkness in the spiritual realm, which John so frequently suggests in his Gospel, is here most dramatically set forth. Augustine says, "And he himself who went out was night!" Compare i, 5; viii, 12; xi, 10; xii, 35, 46; I John ii, 8-11; Rev. xxi, 25.

### In the Somber Shadows.

*It was night.*—JOHN xiii, 30.

The words mark the moment when Judas Iscariot slipped from the supper room where Jesus was holding final discourse with His disciples, and went away to keep his bargain with the murderers of his Master. The long twilight of the Eastern day had faded out, and sullen night had swiftly descended upon the world.

It was night for Jesus. He was entering the over-spreading clouds of His passion. Before another day had passed He would be in His tomb. He was instituting a deathless memorial of His sacrifice. He would soon deliver words of farewell never to be forgotten. He would follow them with a prayer encompassing the world. He would go out into Gethsemane and pour forth His irrepressible agony. He would be haled before false tribunals. He would be buffeted and flouted by His murderers. He would die upon the cross in suffering inconceivable. The bitterness of His cup would be sharpened by the treason of an ostensible friend. Surely darkness and the shadow of death enveloped Him.

Why must the sinless One become the victim of such infamy? There is but one answer: In order that He may run the whole gamut of harsh human experiences. As another has well said, "He must be brought into contact with one who could accept His love, eat His bread, press His hand with assurance of fidelity—and then sell Him." The reason lies in the very nature of His divine mission. "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Yet a great light irradiated the darkness. When Judas Iscariot stepped forth into the blackness of his accursed plot, Christ could exclaim with wondrous exaltation of spirit, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." He felt Himself approaching His triumph. He would emerge

from His sacrifice victorious over death and hell. He would accomplish His Father's will. This was the star which filled His night with glory.

It was night for the disciples of Jesus. They were bathed in the shadows of an approaching separation, in the darkness of doubt, misgiving, and sorrow. One dearer than life was to be removed from their presence. How kind and gentle He had been! How dreadful to lose His sympathy and companionship! All their hopes depended upon Him. All their ambitions were to be fulfilled by Him. If you have planned a course of action, only to be defeated in the hour when success seemed assured; if you have dreamed of attaining some prize, only to awaken to the sense of utter failure, then you know something of the sensations of these disciples on discovering that through the treachery of a comrade the hopes which centered in Jesus were apparently destroyed forever. But light shone in their darkness. The words of Jesus brought consolation to their spirits. "I go to prepare a place for you." "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you." "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

It was night for the world. The powers of darkness were apparently in control. Jerusalem might be the happiest and gayest of cities on the eve of the Passover, its streets full of light, its houses replete with joy; but the forces of evil were having a temporary victory. They were entering upon a saturnalia of blood. The concentrated hate of hell was venting itself upon an innocent victim. But there was light for the world in the sacrifice of Christ, for by that awful consecration humanity was to be redeemed from iniquity. In the night the wonder of the heavens is greater than in the day. The blazing sun makes impossible the vision of the stars. Darkness alone brings that glory to view. Thus in the night of Christ's condemnation to death shone the beauty of His sacrifice for human salvation. Without the blackness the world could not have beheld the brightness.



It was night for Judas, a night in which he could not conceal himself. The words of the Psalmist accurately describe his desperate situation: "If I ascend up to heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee."

Though he was naked before God, there was darkness in his soul so unfathomable that the deepest shadows in the most obscure nook of the city could not be compared with it, and the blackness in the garden beneath the thickest tree bore no resemblance to it. It was the night which he carried in himself.

"He that has light within his own clear breast  
May sit i' th' center and enjoy bright day;  
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,  
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;  
Himself is his own dungeon."

For his darkness Judas himself was wholly responsible. His case presents some difficulties and many warnings, but it must not be forgotten that he deliberately chose evil. Let us disabuse our minds of any feeling that he was the ordained instrument of a divine decree. It is said that he did this that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, which is really equivalent to saying, "Thus you see how the Scriptures are fulfilled." He was not driven to it by an inexorable fate. Prediction does not fix an event. The event confirms the prediction. In God's eye all history is the everlasting now. If His prophets forecast the future, it is because they are inspired to declare what He perceives. Judas did not betray Jesus because his act had been predicted. It was predicted because Omniscience knew he would perform it.

The fall of Judas was not instantaneous. He must have declined slowly but steadily from a point of com-



parative virtue. There was something good in him, as there is in every man. Jesus would never have chosen him as His disciple if he had been without excellence. The disciples would never have trusted him with the treasure-bag if he had shown avarice at the beginning. He would never have followed Jesus three years if he had not been attracted to Him, for he must have made sacrifices of a temporal character similar to those of the other disciples. The man undoubtedly had elements of strength in him. It was unfortunate, perhaps, that he was entrusted with money, for cupidity seems to have been one of his besetting sins. Yet it was doubtless his ability as a financier which gave him his position. His aptitudes were recognized by his fellow disciples. Thus he fell through the peril of his talents. It is usually the strong points of a man's composition which place him in the greatest jeopardy. It is through these that temptation attacks him most insidiously. The money-getter in modern times is in danger of being betrayed by his commercial or financial skill. The man with a fine mind is in peril through intellectual pride. Judas Iscariot was overthrown by an assault upon the strong but unguarded side of his character. We know that he had a keen conscience, and we can almost respect him when we remember that he flung down the pieces of silver for which he betrayed his Lord, and rushed out to commit suicide. His desperate deed reveals the sharpness of the compunction which his moral nature suffered.

How did such a man, with his apparently admirable qualities, bring himself to perform so base an act? Many theories have been advanced to account for his dastardly deed. It has been asserted by some that he was inspired by a good motive; that he saw in Jesus a man who was slow to put into execution the designs for a kingdom which He had come to institute, and believed that he was justified in bringing the halting Master to the necessity of action by instigating a conflict between Him and the Jewish authorities. In this way the Master would be compelled to declare Himself, and any act which would accomplish this purpose would be de-

fensible, however base it might appear when superficially regarded. Such a theory reflects credit upon the charity of those who propose it, but it does not exhibit sound judgment, particularly in view of the words which Matthew declares Jesus uttered touching Judas Iscariot: "The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed. It had been good for that man if he had not been born." Jesus certainly would not have uttered this stern denunciation if Judas had been inspired by a sincere though mistaken motive. History deals kindly with Brutus, who joined the other conspirators in the assassination of Cæsar, because the noble Roman seemed to be inspired by a patriotic purpose; but it is impossible to find in the deed of Judas Iscariot any such warrant for a charitable construction of his treason.

It has also been affirmed that Judas became practically Satan incarnate. This theory is based upon the words of Jesus, "One of you is a devil," uttered in the hour when the loyalty of His disciples was being tested by the hostility of the Jewish authorities to their Master. But this is to place a larger meaning upon the words of Jesus than they would naturally bear, and virtually puts Judas Iscariot beyond the pale of humanity. He showed himself in no sense an abnormal person. Temptation approached him through the ordinary channels which are open to the citadel of every soul. There were doubtless several motives which induced Judas to perform his wicked part in the surrender of Jesus to His enemies. He was unquestionably an ambitious man, and was doubtless disappointed when Jesus refused to submit Himself to the Galilean enthusiasm to enthrone Him as king. Moreover, a man of his temper would be jealous of the evident preference which Jesus showed for some of the other disciples. In addition to this, he was certainly covetous. The scene at Bethany, when Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with spikenard, confirms this impression. It is distinctly asserted in the narratives of this event that the protest of Judas was based, not upon his interest in the poor, but upon his

personal avarice and cupidity. If we combine these motives, they will appear to us sufficiently powerful to lure a dissatisfied and irritated man from a sense of loyalty to his Master.

Little by little, unresisted sinful thoughts draw the soul into the depths where spiritual vision declines and ultimately disappears. A denizen of the sea, known to science by the name of Eryonicus, whose habitation is more than eight hundred yards below the surface of the water, where scarcely any light penetrates, has dispensed with the optical equipment which nature originally bestowed upon it and has sunken into total blindness. Where the eye should be found there is nothing but a depression, as if the organ of sight had been lifted out. The scientist explains that this member of the crustacean family has occasioned its own fate by choosing to live where eyes are not required, because there is insufficient light for seeing. Judas permitted himself to be drawn by the evil passions of his soul to a spiritual plane where darkness quenched the light of conscience and made him the basest of men.



The scene at the last supper, which John has depicted with so much felicity, marks the decisive point in the fall of Judas Iscariot. Though he had already bargained with the authorities for the betrayal of Jesus, there was yet time enough for him to withdraw from his iniquitous compact. While they were reclining at the table, Jesus, who had earlier in this memorable evening intimated the betrayal by one of His disciples, repeated the prediction that one of His own friends would deal treacherously with Him. When Simon Peter urged John to ask the Lord who it was of whom He spoke, and the beloved disciple had proffered the request to his Lord, Jesus answered: "He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it." This act of itself would have attracted no attention, because it was the ordinary mark of distinction conferred upon a guest by

the host, and it is evident that the announcement of this token by which the traitor could be detected was heard only by John himself. It is said that after the sop Satan entered into him, by which it is not to be understood that the man was suddenly and unwillingly possessed of an evil spirit which he could not resist, but that at this precise moment he determined to stifle all suggestions of loyalty to his Lord and to consummate the awful iniquity upon which he had entered. Amid all the tender associations of that solemn hour there was not enough moral sanity left in the man to resist temptation.

It has been said that John Wilkes Booth inflamed himself with sufficient daring to make the fatal assault upon Abraham Lincoln by the use of alcoholic liquor. His act could be described in the exact terms employed concerning Judas Iscariot: "Satan entered into him." But the choice of iniquity was freely his own. Judas at this moment surrendered himself unreservedly to the evil. He had toyed with it for many days. He was free while he was dallying. Now the temporizing was at an end and he was enslaved by the evil. Faust and Mephistopheles illustrated a tragic fact of human life. When the compact has been signed and sealed, doom is irrevocable. There was no magic in the morsel of food which Jesus gave to Judas. There was no inexorable fate about the traitor's conduct. He could have resisted even at that last instant, but he chose to sell himself to baseness, and the die was cast. It was a terrible tragedy. Night then took full possession of him. Darkness had been invading the territory of his soul from the moment when he began to draw away from Christ through his misconception of the spiritual character of his Lord's kingdom. The shadows enlarged and deepened through every subsequent act of dalliance with temptation. It grew darker and deadlier in his soul, until the light of conscience suffered a temporary eclipse.

A picture in the royal gallery at Brussels represents Judas wandering about on the night after the betrayal. He comes accidentally upon the workmen who have been

making the cross upon which Christ will be crucified in the morning. A fire which has been kindled to keep off the chill of the night throws its light full upon the faces of the workmen, who are now sleeping peacefully, resting from their labors. The face of Judas is partly in the shade, but it is deeply expressive of awful remorse and agony, as he catches sight of the grim tools and the rude cross which his treachery had prepared for his Lord, but still though in the very tortures of hell, he clutches his money-bag and hurries on into the night. This soul-tragedy of Judas marks the furthestmost point to which sin can exile a man from God.

Mr. Ruskin once objected to the reading of books like Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" on the ground that men ought not to study the decline and fall of anything, but rather to fix their attention upon progress and elevation, since there are tendencies enough to failure in all of us, and we shall be best employed in studying success. But everything depends upon the purpose of our study. If we examine the career of Judas Iscariot merely as a strange psychological phenomenon, we shall probably receive no profit from our examination, other than the exercise of our intellectual faculties upon a very interesting problem; but if we see in the appalling catastrophe of his life warnings which are applicable to every soul assaulted by subtle and insidious temptations, we shall be strengthened to resist the earliest approaches of evil and to bind ourselves by chains of indestructible loyalty to Him whom we joyously proclaim our Lord and Master.

## THE VALEDICTORY DISCOURSES.

HERE the words of Jesus are many, but their purpose is one; He will prepare His disciples for a life apart from His visible presence. The end of His journey in their company has been reached. In a few hours at most He will be swept from their fellowship by the hand of violence. There is a pause before the fury of death breaks in upon their circle. In the calm which precedes the tempest of hate and cruelty soon to smite Him, Jesus pronounces His farewell message. It is not likely that all He said that last evening has been preserved; but, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that which was most essential, both to meet the needs of the despondent group before Him and to fulfill the requirements of future generations of believers, has been written down in ineffaceable characters.

Much of what Jesus utters on this occasion would have had equal appropriateness at the time of His ascension, an event which John does not mention. But as these disciples had no clear anticipation of His resurrection, notwithstanding His predictions, it was important that words of consolation should be given them now. The death of Jesus would throw them back upon themselves with terrifying suddenness. The poverty of their own thoughts would make their interpretation of His departure insufficient for the crisis. Their feeble faith would fail them. They required immediate help to carry them through the first hours of darkness and chill. Hence these wonderful discourses have both an instant and a remote significance. They would recur to the memory of these disciples after Jesus had ascended. They would arise in their minds with greater vividness when the blessing of Pentecost had fallen upon them. Through the entire period of apostolic ministry they would be a



treasury of comfort and inspiration. Moreover—and perhaps this is the thing of chief importance—they would have a continuous and permanent value for the whole Christian community in all ages. Spoken at the moment when Christ's distinctly earthly ministry was closing (for after the resurrection His mode of being was different) they not only possess dramatic power to arrest attention as the final utterances of a sublime Teacher, but they also relate themselves sympathetically to the whole human family, every member of which at some time experiences the pain of separation and the bitterness of farewell. These are human words, but they are filled with divine meaning. They reach across the centuries and awaken hope and courage in the souls of millions of our race who, though they have not seen the face of Jesus, hear in His voice the soothing tones of personal affection and are comforted.

The persons listening to Jesus on that last evening were simple-minded mortals, but they were in such a position as men never occupied before or since. They had spent three years under the intimate instruction of the greatest figure in history. But their point of view was determined by very earthly conceptions. They had become convinced that Jesus could do anything He might undertake, but they were unprepared to see Him choose death. Though He had frequently prophesied the tragic end of His life, His announcements had not carried conviction to their minds. At least they had never faced the grim reality until now. His present solemn assertion that He is quickly to take His departure fills them first with incredulity, then with consternation, and finally with profound and inconsolable grief. It is at this point that His words of comfortable assurance begin.

They are introduced by the triumphant expression, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him!" (xiii, 31, 32.) In the hour of His apparent defeat He emerges from the shadow of depression into the elation of victory. The mystery of it confuses these humble disciples. He is going away; and He tells them this is the very departure of which He formerly spoke

to the Jewish leaders, who could or would not understand Him, and it is very apparent that these troubled souls are loth to believe Him. Nevertheless, He speaks the dreadful truth. Moreover, He has a last charge to lay upon them; for they will require added strength for the unique situation in which they are to find themselves after He has withdrawn. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love to one another."

But they are in no mood for precepts. The ideal life can not take hold upon their minds until they have been adjusted to this appalling fact in their immediate, earthly life. Jesus is going away—that is the matter of critical importance. Let us keep to that, thinks Peter, and he puts his feelings into words, which are wholly characteristics. "Whither goest Thou? Why can not I follow Thee now?" (xiii, 36, 37.) He is speaking for the entire group. It is as if he were saying: "We have left all to follow Thee—business, possessions, friends, family—everything. We have followed Thee whithersoever Thou hast gone. We have sometimes questioned the way Thou hast gone, as in the case of the journey to Bethany, when Lazarus died, but in the end we have always followed. There is no question now. We are ready to follow at once and anywhere. Why can not we accompany Thee? We are willing to die for Thee if there is need."

This is the first interruption to the farewell discourses of Jesus, but it is followed by similar breaks on the part of Thomas, Philip, and Jude. These interruptions determine in large part the course of the earlier portions of Christ's address, and account for any apparent deviations from a pre-determined line of thought in the mind of Jesus. What He now utters could not have been wholly impromptu. For months He has been anticipating the hour of separation, and has been fully conscious of the crisis it would bring to His disciples. The fundamental truths He must impart to them, as well as

the special consolations He would offer, were all clearly before Him. Broken as is the continuity of His address by the eager questions of His listeners, the path He pursues is traceable to the end, though there are places where He swerves aside temporarily and other points at which He turns back upon the way and travels spaces which He has already traversed. The general movement of the Master's intention is clearly discernible. He would first make His disciples understand that His temporal mission among men was at an end, and then He would impart to them such comfortable assurances and practical instructions as these: He was going away to His Father, but they would soon follow Him to this same home of the soul, for He was going to prepare a place for them. They would lose nothing of permanent value by His withdrawal; on the contrary, they would experience an increase of power after He was gone and be able to perform even greater works than He had wrought among them. (xiv, 12-14.) Moreover, they would have for their comfort, in place of His visible, fleshly companionship, the fellowship of His spiritual presence, the communion of the Holy Spirit and of the Father, a rich plenitude of divine association. (xiv, 16-26.) His own peace He would leave with them. They had ample evidence of the depth and security of this possession in His majestic life. Meanwhile, His going away would prove to the world His filial obedience to the Father and His essential unity with Him. (xiv, 27-31.) He would emphasize the spiritual relation of the disciples to Himself in view of their future needs and responsibilities—a continuous, unbreakable, vital co-ordination like that which exists between the vine and the branches. (xv, 1-11.) He would define the normal relation of His followers to one another—a close fellowship cemented by love—made necessary, both for effectiveness in bearing fruit and also for mutual help and comfort in the trial of their faith and courage which would be called forth when the hatred of the world broke upon them because of their loyalty to Him. (xv, 11-25.) He would

make known to them that their personal testimony, which alone could not be adequate to the task of overcoming the world's antipathy, would be enforced, invigorated, and made invincible by the Holy Spirit, who should also testify to Him, convince the world, and guide His disciples. (xv, 26—xvi, 1-15.) He would commend these disciples to the Father in a prayer which, being spoken in their hearing, would confirm to their minds His sublime purpose, and taking them up into His divine will would open to them the vision of His vast mission to the children of men.

This is an outline of what Jesus may be presumed to have designed to say to His disciples, and which He followed with certain deviations, occasioned by the eager questionings of the company. By these inquiries the address was diverted to various points of incalculable importance. Some of the utterances thus drawn out are so sublime that they make us grateful for the interruptions which elicited them. The questions are so natural that had we been present we should have desired to ask them ourselves. Jesus yielded Himself so graciously to these inquiries that we are fain to believe He was glad to have them put to Him. While He returned to the main line of His discourse after each interrupting request, He evidently felt no sense of disturbance, except in the case of Peter, whom He found it necessary to rebuke and who appears to have kept an awed silence thereafter to the end. (xiii, 36-38.)

The recurrence of ideas or topics in the farewell message of Jesus imparts a certain naturalness to His address which it would not possess if we had a more orderly, consecutive, and logical arrangement of His words. Moreover, such an adjustment would awaken the suspicion that it had been devised by John to satisfy his didactic purpose, or indeed that the whole was a fabrication like those speeches which historians and poets have placed in the mouths of their heroes, of which only a few germinal ideas are the literal basis. This valedictory of Jesus is obviously no forgery, but an authentic

report of an informal, semi-conversational address, as it flowed from the lips of the speaker, evoked by the exigencies of the hour and the solicitude of those who listened to its matchless revelations. The transparent simplicity of this immortal message constitutes one of its perennial charms; its wealth of spiritual meaning gives it incomparable grandeur. The humblest intelligence can extract comfort and strength from it, and the mightiest intellects can never exhaust its treasures.

## IV.

# PRELIMINARY SAYINGS.

## CHAPTER XIII, 31-35.

The supper which Christ held with His disciples when He gave them His farewell must have been full of friendly heart-intercourse; for Christ spoke just as tenderly and cordially to them as a father to his dear little children when he is obliged to part from them.—*Luther.*

"HERE we are entering the holy of holies in the Passion history," says Olshausen. The valedictory address of our Lord to His disciples, which begins with the thirty-first verse, is properly called "a gospel within the Gospel." It brings us to the very heart of Christ and reveals those inner depths of His mind which have only been intimated in His previous discourses. We have before us in this passage the first or introductory section of Christ's final message to His disciples. That message is conveyed in a series of discourses concluding with a sublime prayer, which, being spoken in the hearing of the eleven faithful ones, is not only in the nature of intercession *for* them, but in a large sense the vehicle of truth *to* them.

The discourses fall into two groups, the first being uttered in the room where the last supper was eaten, the second being delivered by the way, as the Master and His disciples turned their steps toward Gethsemane, or at some point where they halted for the solemn words with which Jesus finished His valedictory. The line of division is at the end of chapter xiv, where Jesus says, "Arise, let us go hence."

The tone of the first part is one of consolation, as the tone of the second is one of instruction, while both contain new revelations on the continuous fellowship



of Christ with His disciples. The discourses of the first series are chiefly responses to questions proffered by individual inquirers: Peter (xiii, 36), Thomas (xiv, 5), Philip (xiv, 8), Jude (xiv, 22). This portion of the farewell message is naturally divided by the problems which these disciples suggest, and which Jesus takes up and considers in turn.

The question of Peter, "Whither goest Thou?" (36), virtually leads to the first of these discussions; but it is preceded by Christ's announcement that the hour of His glorification has arrived, accompanied by certain memorable instructions required by the fact that His departure is so imminent. These opening words of farewell contain in germ the essence of the teaching to be further developed on this occasion. While the Synoptists record certain closing messages touching the external effects of the establishment of Christ's kingdom, John sets down those words of our Lord which bear upon the interior and more spiritual consequences of Christ's mission.

We have under consideration in our present study three great utterances: 1. A word of personal triumph; 2. A word on the necessity of separation; 3. A word of instruction for the future.

### **I. THE TRIUMPH DECLARED. (31, 32.)**

When Judas departed, restraint was removed from the lips of Jesus and His Spirit exulted. (Compare xii, 23.) There was no longer occasion for reserve. The words, "Now is the Son of man glorified," etc., are a cry of relief and a shout of expectancy. The culmination of His work has been attained. He is advancing rapidly to the glory which is His right, in view of the faithful execution of His mission. False glory, such as Judas sought, has been condemned by the humble service Jesus has just been rendering to His disciples. True glory has been exemplified at the same time by that very humility.

It is the Son of man who has thus been glorified.

There is careful choice of words here. Emphasis is laid upon the human aspects of Christ's person, that the sublime significance of His Messianic office may be made more clear. He is the Revealer of the divine character in terms of human understanding. It is thus that God is glorified in Him. The Father becomes intelligible in the service of the Son: It is in this way we have "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. iv, 6.)

In the original Christ's exultation is phrased in the past tense, "was glorified;" but in such a sense as to sum up all that has been experienced up to and including the triumphant present. The clause, "If God be glorified in Him," has no good authority and is omitted by the revisers. Westcott has arranged the members of this great saying in a way to show its symmetry, and others have followed him:

"Now was glorified the Son of man,  
And God was glorified in Him;  
And God shall glorify Him in Himself,  
And straightway shall He glorify Him."

The Father will glorify Him straightway by receiving Him to Himself, to the eternal glory of the Godhead. (xvii, 5.) The resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God will complete the cycle of His glorious humiliation and exaltation. (Phil. ii, 9-11.)

## II. THE SEPARATION ANNOUNCED. (33.)

Great tenderness is shown by Jesus in proclaiming that His departure is at hand. The expression, "little children," is never elsewhere in this gospel placed upon the lips of the Master. At the moment when He thinks of the forlorn condition of His disciples after His departure, He breaks out into this exquisite address. The beloved disciple is charmed by it, and adopts it in his epistles. Tradition declares that it was often on his tongue when he discoursed to the Churches.

The absolute character of Christ's withdrawal from

the world is emphasized in the words, "Yet a little while I am with you. . . . Whither I go ye can not come." The separation was inevitable. But it was not eternal. "Ye shall seek Me," He says, but He does not add, as to the Jews, "and shall not find Me." (vii, 34.) Nor did He say, "Ye shall die in your sins," as He had said to His enemies. (viii, 21.) He makes it clear that whither He goes they can not follow now, but sometime they would seek and find Him. Almost immediately He will assure them that they shall be permitted to come after Him and will make plain the method by which their hopes shall be gratified. (xiv, 3.)

### III. THE COMMANDMENT GIVEN. (34, 35.)

During the period of their temporary separation from Him the disciples of Jesus were to be in process of development toward a higher excellence than was attainable by the mere teaching of their Master. Through discipline they would increase in spiritual strength and wisdom. But for the adequate culture of their souls they required a helpful precept to afford a working philosophy for the conduct of life. Hence Jesus speaks to them a word of command, as the head of a household, characterized by both tenderness and authority. (34.)

This was not a new commandment in the sense that nothing approaching it had ever been heard before. The injunction to love one's neighbor as one's self was as old as the Levitical law (Lev. xix, 18; Luke x, 27); and was accepted by the contemporaries of these disciples as binding upon their consciences. Something like it can be found in the religious works of the East and in the maxims of the Greeks. But Christ's precept leads the mind to a higher conception of love. "As I have loved you" indicates a new motive, a new measure, and a new model. Love after this fashion is not to be found anywhere outside the revelation of Jesus Christ. Such a commandment will always be new, for it will need to be learned afresh by every soul as he passes into the experience of the divine life. Its uniqueness is appre-

hended as soon as one compares the noblest exhibitions of love in the pagan or ancient Jewish world with the love manifested in the sacrifice of Christ and celebrated by Paul in 1 Cor. xiii.

"By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples." The distinguishing note in the Christian's life would be this uncommon love. By this the Master's society would be held together, and by it the world would be impressed with the divinity of His mission. (Compare Acts ii, 44-47; iv, 32-35; 1 John iii, 10-14.) The heathen recognized the badge which Jesus affixed to His disciples. "See how these Christians love one another!" Tertullian records they were wont to exclaim. "Their Master has made them believe that they are all brethren," said Lucian.

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### The Life Glorious.

*Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.*—JOHN xiii, 31.

A note of triumph in an hour of bitterness! Judas Iscariot has just gone out into the darkness of the night to complete his diabolical conspiracy against the Lord. The tragedy of Christ's earthly career is rushing to its climax. Iniquity is now to achieve its worst. Jesus has been beset by evil throughout the entire period of His public ministry, but hatred is gathering itself up for the final stroke. Yet the Master, who is perfectly conscious of the rapidly approaching catastrophe, exclaims with the accent of victory, "Now is the Son of man glorified!"

That is the mood which Christ has taught all Christians to have in the presence of evil. The true disciple is to confront trial with the spirit of Bunyan's pilgrim meeting Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation and shouting, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors." The Christian's temptations and tribulations are not to daunt him and to make him tremble, but to

nerve him, to give him glowing anticipations of victory, just as the wrestler with the billows of the Atlantic comes out of the surf, not to speak of being beaten and tossed by the sea, but of having bathed in the great ocean, himself conquering it and using it for his own delight. This is what the apostle James means when he says, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." This is what Paul means when he speaks of rejoicing in tribulation.

A man with such a spirit will welcome trial; by enduring it with fortitude his true mettle will be shown. The brave man desires opportunity to reveal his quality. No American can forget the generous rivalry of the whole ship's crew under Admiral Evans for the opportunity to die with the sinking of the Merrimac. In a still nobler spirit Jesus said, "Let the catastrophe be hastened. The hour is come. The Son of man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him."

Glory is a term which has been much abused. The thing for which it frequently stands is scarcely worth the effort of an immortal being. On one of the walls of the Pantheon in Paris is seen a brilliant painting by a famous artist descriptive of the destiny of France. A mighty host in splendid cavalcade sweeps circling upward through the clouds of war to the summit, where glory crowns the triumphant warriors. But as one stands looking on this dazzling spectacle he can not help reflecting the sentiment expressed in Gray's familiar lines:

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave  
Alike await the inevitable hour—  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

"To-morrow, victory or Westminster Abbey!" cried a famous commander to his host on the eve of a great battle. And many a brave soul has been sustained in the direst conflict by the thought of the immortality which accompanies the sacrifices of the valorous. But it would jar upon our sense of the sanctity of Christ's person, if we could suppose that He had in mind the enrollment

of His name high upon the records of illustrious deeds when He said, "Now is the Son of man glorified."

On various monuments and memorial tablets one reads inscriptions which declare that this general or that admiral "fell gloriously" on this field of battle or in that naval engagement, fighting for the honor of his native land or for the reputation of his country's flag. It is evident, then, that there is a better sense of glory attached to the accomplishment of great tasks for the sake of noble causes. Into such undertakings the element of duty enters, and no sacrifice is regarded as too severe in the accomplishment of a great design. This conception assists us to appreciate, in an approximate way, the thought in the mind of Jesus when He said, "Now is the Son of man glorified," for it was in the culmination of His mission among men that His human career was brought to such a tragic termination.



The Son of man is glorified by fulfilling the mission of His human life, and every other man is glorified in proportion to the fidelity with which he executes the purpose of his life. Every creation of God is glorious in the same way. Paul says: "There are celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for one star differeth from another star in glory." The glory of the planets consists in their accomplishing the functions for which they exist. The glory of living organisms is manifested by achieving the results for which they were created. Jesus condemns the barren fig-tree because it does not produce fruit. The vine dresser in the parable is disposed to cut down the vine because it does not act as a vine should. Man is glorified by his work in proportion to the suitability with which it is accomplished.

Abraham Lincoln told General Sickles that there was glory enough on the field of Gettysburg to go all the



way round, from General Meade to the humblest enlisted man in the ranks. That is, every man engaged in that great conflict was glorified by his fidelity to the obligation imposed upon him. When the "Lusitania" came into port, having captured the blue ribbon of the Atlantic, there was glory enough to go all the way around, from the naval architect who designed her to the humblest seaman between her decks. There was one glory of the captain on the bridge, and another glory of the poor stokers in the bowels of the ship, but in each case the glory consisted in accomplishing the specific function assigned.

Man in his essential being is glorified by the exactness with which his various functions are performed. He is physically glorified when all his bodily powers are properly exercised. "The glory of young men is their strength," exclaimed the wise man of old. A man is glorified intellectually when his mind performs its rightful offices. He is glorified morally when he yields to the sovereignty of conscience, when he chooses righteousness and eschews evil. Holiness is the perfect ideal of human life. To attain this is the real purpose of living, but no holiness exists without love; and love can not exhibit itself without sacrifice; and sacrifice necessitates suffering. The suffering man who sacrifices for others, that they may be saved, becomes the incarnation of love and attains holiness, and so becomes glorified.

Now the Son of man came to express God to the world and to save men from their sins. His personal life was subjected to many limitations. His divinity was so obscured by the conditions of His human life that His glory was not always apparent. But occasionally it broke forth in unmistakable beauty. At twelve years of age, reasoning with the doctors in the temple, His divine radiance pierced through the veil of His flesh. His glory was seen in His victory over temptation, in the signs and wonders which He performed, in the marvelous words which He spoke, in the remarkable splendors of the transfiguration. In all of these there were anticipations of His final glory. But that which dis-

closed His divinity most effectually was His sacrifice for the sins of men. In the moment when He was to consummate His purpose in death, He could say, "Now is the Son of man glorified."

As the Son of man is glorified by the accomplishment of His redemptive mission, so all the sons of men are glorified in proportion as they fulfill the purpose of their being. Glory is not a thing which can be imparted, for it is not an external illumination, but an inner beauty of character.

Sydney Smith was accustomed to call a servant and bid her "glorify" his room; by which he meant that three Venetian windows of a bay were to be thrown open, permitting the sunlight to flood the chamber. But if the room had been tawdry and mean, the sun would only have served to expose its ugliness. The light would be beautiful, but the thing lighted would be repulsive. So dignities can not make a man glorious; wealth can not make him noble. A crown can not make a monarch kingly. The words of Tennyson are pertinent:

"Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule;  
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straitened forehead of the  
fool."

There is no glory in social or political eminence acquired unworthily. The edicts of the German Empire can not make old Kaiser Wilhelm the "Great" unless he was actually great. Glory consists not in being called glorious, but in being glorious; and that life is truly glorious which shines with an inner radiance pouring from a holy character.



While the Son of man is thus glorified, He is at the same time glorifying God. "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." To glorify God is to make Him intelligible. The glory of God is His essential being. He is glorious when seen in absolute truthfulness. All His creations glorify Him in pro-



portion as they make clear His actual nature. The psalmist had some conception of this when he called upon all animate nature to glorify God: "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." So Linnæus, the naturalist, could say of the unfolding of a blossom, "I saw God in His glory passing near me, and bowed my head in worship." All our forms of worship glorify God in proportion as they make Him intelligible. The psalmist had some notion of this also, when he cried: "Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet. Praise Him with the psaltery and the harp. Praise Him with the timbrel and dance. Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise Him upon the loud cymbals. Praise Him upon the high-sounding cymbals." If your music makes God better known it is glorious, for it glorifies Him. In so far as it falls short of this it is inglorious. Men are writing hymns, painting pictures, producing various forms of literature, in which they hope to be ministers of religion. In so far as they make God intelligible in these works of the mind and spirit they glorify Him. It is so with human life. If the character of a man makes the character of God more intelligible, then it glorifies God. This is doubtless what St. Paul meant when he said, "Glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." Now the Son of man does this in perfection. He is "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person." In Him men read God's character accurately. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father He hath declared Him." But observe that the divine glory of Christ is in His sacrificial work for the welfare of men. In this shines holiness and love, and God is thus seen in His essential character. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Now the life of service and sacrifice continues to be the supreme method by which God is glorified. When a man gives himself for the benefit of others he is entering into the redemptive work of Christ. That is suf-

fering, not for suffering's sake, but for a sublime end—the help and salvation of humanity.

Lacordaire's self-humiliation has made him famous among persons who have attempted to secure holiness by the mortification of the flesh. He descended from his pulpit and received many lashes upon his bared back at the hands of his fellows. He tied himself to a pillar in the crypt of the church that he might be flogged by those to whom he had ministered. He fastened himself to a rude cross and endured its torments for hours in order that he might enter into the sufferings of Jesus. But all this had no better object than the refinement of his own spiritual character. Sacrifice born of love, and seeking the salvation of others, is of a different sort, and this glorifies God because it reveals the character of Him whose supreme purpose is to save a lost world.

Now, this is what makes life glorious: Not to receive, but to give; not to have the sun shine on us, but to have the light shining out of us; not to be pampered, but to profit others. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many." In so doing He glorified God. That is, He made God more intelligible to the world.

A great man sat to a sculptor in Rome for a marble bust. Day after day the artist's friends would come into his studio to admire his workmanship. They would speculate about the original of the figure he was carving. One of the most thoughtful of them all said, "It is the Christ." Said the distinguished man of whom this story is told, "If I thought I did not resemble Jesus in anything but physical appearance, I should be very much dissatisfied with myself." To be like Christ in spirit, to sacrifice for love's sake, that others may be won to the truth—this is the divine life, and by these are the sons of men glorified, and God is glorified in them.

## V.

### SEPARATION; ITS NECESSITY AND OUTCOME.

XIII, 36—XIV, 1-4.

The Gospel of John is a distillation of the life and teaching of Jesus from the alembic of the apostle's own mind. It is his interpretation of the meaning of Christ's words, deeds, and person, derived from intimate personal relations with him, and colored and shaped by a long life of Christian thought and experience.—*Stevens.*

THE freedom of impromptu inquiry allowed to His disciples by our Lord, as He enters upon His final consolations and instructions, proves the beautiful intimacy existing between Jesus and His little company of followers. The sense of fellowship which all experience is doubtless heightened by the fact that they have been eating and drinking together. Formal discourse was almost an impossibility. "It was simple, quiet table-talk," says Luther, "every one opening his heart, and showing his thoughts freely and frankly, and without restraint. Never since the world began was there a more delightful meal than that." The familiar conversation naturally, easily, and almost insensibly merges into an address by the Master, which is now and then punctuated with a question interposed by an eager listener. "These interruptions," says Canon Bernard, "do not turn aside the drift of the discourse. They assist it by expressing the feelings which the discourse intends to meet."

The first of these interruptions occurs when the impulsive and affectionate Peter cries out, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" This question at once introduces the final destination of Christ, and opens the first topic which the Master treats in detail. He has already explicitly announced that His departure is at hand. He will now

reveal the place whither He is going. That will involve the whole question of the future life of the faithful. Herein it is manifest, as in many other passages, that the farewell words of Jesus were directed, not merely to those persons who originally heard them, but also to all subsequent believers, and in one sense to the entire race, for interest in the future life is universal among mankind.

The colloquy between Peter and Jesus is closely related in thought to the words with which the fourteenth chapter begins, and hence we consider these portions together. We have, first, Words of Premonition; second, Words of Consolation.

### I. WORDS OF PREMONITION. (XIII, 36-38.)

#### I. Peter's Perplexity (36).

Peter's mind is swept away from all that Jesus has just said except the declaration that his Master is about to depart whither he can not go. That is indeed the central point of all. It has doubtless arrested and staggered the thought of the other disciples, too. The rest of what Jesus has just uttered can well be pondered later, but this demands instant attention. The announcement that his Lord is going forth anywhere without him is disturbing to Peter, who has enjoyed such confidential relations with Jesus that he has frequently been permitted to share sacred experiences with his Master from which many of the disciples have been excluded. He does not understand whither Jesus is going, but he is eager to learn the significance of the fact that one so ready to accompany Him must be left behind.

Apparently Peter has not yet recovered from the impression made upon his imagination by the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. (xii, 15.) If Christ is truly the King-Messiah, will He not establish His kingdom here in the capital? Why should He separate Himself from His faithful adherents at the very moment when He seems likely to establish His sovereignty? The



mind of the disciple is still harboring the thought of temporal rule.

The response of Jesus affirms anew the necessity of separation, but adds a note of encouragement. "Thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards." The disciple is thus both restrained and incited. Peter has yet a great mission to fulfill. (Matt. xvi, 18.) Then he can follow his Master literally. He is not yet prepared for such a journey. His faith is not strong enough to endure it, and his purpose would fail if subjected to the test. It will not be required of him yet. In due season he will be permitted to follow his Lord in the very fashion of Christ's departure. (xxi, 18, 19.)

## 2. The Disciple's Profession of Loyalty (37).

Peter's courage and fidelity seem to him to be under suspicion, and he warmly protests: "Why can not I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake?" He evidently thinks that Jesus forbids him to accompany Him now because he is incapable of facing peril, and he stoutly affirms his readiness to suffer martyrdom in proof of his loyalty. He is qualified, he fancies, to die for Christ before Christ has died for him. He does not understand precisely what Jesus is referring to, but if the Master requires help in any emergency, Peter is eager to assist Him. His feelings are shared by the other disciples, who are equally desirous of exhibiting their resolution. (Matt. xxvi, 35; Mark xiv, 31.) Thomas had shown a similar spirit on a former occasion. (xi, 16.) St. Paul has taught us that it is possible to welcome death for principle and yet be devoid of genuine Christian love. (1 Cor. xiii, 3.) Peter was in need of much discipline before he could attain this excellence.

## 3. The Master's Prediction of Failure (38).

"Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake?" exclaims the Lord, taking up the very words of Peter. There was a tender pathos in the situation. Perhaps Jesus looked beyond this moment to the hour when Peter would

indeed do this very thing, which he thought himself capable of performing now. But Jesus knew him better than he knew himself. He does not doubt the disciple's sincerity, but He is conscious of his frailty. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

The prediction which Jesus now pronounces is recorded by all of the evangelists, two of whom recall expressions of incredulity on the part of the disciples. It is a mark of Christ's preternatural foresight that He thus clearly indicates the terrible lapse of Peter. (ii, 24, 25.) To the account of Christ's prediction given by the other evangelists Mark adds that Christ's warning only aroused Peter to a more vehement declaration of his purpose to be true at all cost. (Mark xiv. 29-31.)

From this moment Peter falls into silence. He interrupts Christ's discourse no more. He is pained and dismayed beyond description. He does not appear again in John's narrative until xviii, 10, where he is shown to have recovered his spirit, though his misguided zeal once more calls out the Master's rebuke.

## II. WORDS OF CONSOLATION. (XIV, 1-4.)

### 1. Comfort for the Comfortless (1).

Despondency settled down upon the minds of the disciples as they heard Jesus announce His departure, accompanied by the declaration that one of His followers would betray Him and another would deny Him. How were they to meet their opponents in the world if the most self-reliant member of their band was to make a failure? They could only face the future with consternation. He who had been their bond of union, their source of courage, their hope of success was now to leave them. How deep was the gloom of to-morrow!

Jesus is moved with compassion for their sorrow and solicitude. He addresses Himself immediately to the task of comforting them. "Let not your heart be troubled!" What gracious words are these! There is but one heart in the whole company, and that is pierced with fear and distrust. Like a father consoling his little

children, Jesus begins in terms of soothing affection. He bids these disciples refrain from agitation. Calmness is their supreme need now. Their condition requires self-control. Hence He gives them both sympathy and counsel. "Let not your heart be troubled." His own heart had been agitated, and the very word employed here had been used concerning Himself when He had been shaken by powerful emotions. (xi, 33; xii, 27; xiii, 21.) It was often applied to the turbulence of the sea when swept by the storm, and it would suggest to these men memories of other days when some of them had been tossed on the billows of Galilee. But they must not allow their spirits to be lashed into trepidation now. They would realize in a moment that the outlook was not so forbidding as they fancied. A great hope would dawn upon their souls. Such comfort He repeated later. (xiv, 27; xvi, 33.) Long ago He had said, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He will fulfill this promise in the present crisis if they can but trust Him.

"Believe in God, believe also in Me." In this way calmness will possess your hearts. It is not a merely theoretical faith in God, such as every Jew professed, and the majority of men always have, which Jesus urged upon His disciples, but a practical reliance on the goodness and wisdom of Divine Providence. This is the sovereign balm for heartache. The psalmist understood this. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God."

"Believe also in Me" links Christ with God and so implies His divinity. To believe *in* Christ is more than to believe Christ. It involves dependence on Him as the ultimate revealer and interpreter of God. To believe in Christ is to bring God out into clear personal relations to the soul. Faith is, then, not belief in certain statements about God, but trust in a Person who is powerful, faithful, and loving, and who is manifested in His Son. To believe in Christ is thus both an aid

to belief in God and an advanced step in faith. Many souls have found this true in their own experience. In Christ they have discovered God, though without Him God was but a dream. In Christ they have secured comfort, though without Him God has seemed to be afar off. "Believe in God, believe also in Me" is a high challenge to the soul. Whenever accepted, it brings peace and rest.

## **2. Home for the Homeless (2-4).**

If His disciples believe in Him, Jesus has a strong consolation for them. The goal He seeks in departing from them is His Father's house, and to that home His faithful ones shall be admitted, for there will be room enough for all. The Father's house is a new figure for heaven. (Matt. v, 34; vi, 9.) The temple had been called by that phrase, but there was not the sense of familiar intercourse in the expression so employed which inheres in the thought of a home in which God is Father, and all others are children of the household, with rights and privileges such as strangers can never enjoy.

In this home there will be abundant provision, for there are many abiding places there. The word "mansions" conveys the idea of amplitude. The figure suggests an Oriental palace with its numerous apartments. There is no meaning of degrees of felicity in the word "many," but rather sufficiency of accommodation. The original word from which our "mansions" is derived was often applied to stations on a journey, where entertainment could be secured for the night. The ideas of progress and rest are both contained in the expression. These disciples were yet to be great travelers. But in due time they would reach their abiding place in the Father's house, which can not mean vaguely the universe of God, otherwise the word "dominions" would answer as well. "This heavenly dwelling is above all the emblem of a spiritual state: that of communion with the Father, the filial position which is accorded to Christ in the divine glory, and in which He will give believers

a share. But this state will be realized in a definite place, the place where God most illustriously manifests His presence and His glory—heaven.”—*Godet*. How the promise of Christ can be interpreted in a local sense we do not know. We have the fact, and faith clings to it with desire, remembering Paul’s words about “a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” (2 Cor. v, 1.)

The certainty of it is based on the character of Christ. It is impossible to suppose that He would deceive His disciples. “If it were not so I would have told you.” He appeals to His own candor for the substantiation of His words. He came from heaven and knew the facts. All things that He received of the Father He made known to His disciples. He could not have taught them to love Him and follow Him, if He did not intend to make them partners of His inheritance. “I go to prepare a place for you.” Here faith in Christ’s word is necessary in addition to faith in God. He is the forerunner. (Heb. vi, 20.) The picture is that of a messenger going forward in advance of those for whom provision is to be made. Jesus anticipates the welcome of the Father. He promises that all shall be made ready for His beloved. As men choose the most suitable room for a guest, Christ will select and appoint proper places for His own.

The joy of it is assured. “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” He must depart in order to return. They can now see the reasonableness of separation. “I come again,” or “I am coming” is the actual reading. The promise can not be limited to the final coming at the end of the world. It may include the coming at the resurrection, at conversion, at death, at Pentecost—Christ is always coming. As each disciple in future years laid down his work and passed to his reward he must have recognized in his departure the fulfillment of Christ’s promise. “I am coming again to receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” Canon Bernard puts the

matter correctly: "Yes! of all words that have been spoken upon earth, these have done the most to dispel the darkness beyond the grave, and to give secure expectations to men as they approach it."

Like a teacher who probes the mind of his pupils to ascertain to what extent they have appropriated the truth he has been seeking to inculcate in their minds, Jesus says, "Whither I go ye know the way." It is equivalent to asserting that after three years of association with Him, they ought to understand the path by which the heavenly world and fellowship with the Father is attained. The life of Christ was of such a character that, while these disciples might be in doubt concerning the goal for which He was setting out, they were certain of the direction—He could only go to God.

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### The Heavenly Home.

*In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also.*—JOHN xiv, 2, 3.

When Henry D. Thoreau was passing through his last illness, he was visited by Parker Pillsbury, of anti-slavery fame, who spoke to him some words of farewell, saying, as he was about to close the interview, "You seem so near the brink of the dark river that I almost wonder how the opposite shore may appear to you." Thoreau quietly murmured, "One world at a time, one world at a time," and ventured nothing further. These words express the common sentiment of our day, and in the main they convey a wholesome thought: for it is of the utmost importance that we should devote our energies to filling the present life with success, assured that by this means we shall properly prepare ourselves for the life which is to come.



At the same time it must be remembered that there is value in keeping the mind open to the influences of the celestial world, and in studying all the problems of the present in the light of the unmeasured future. Nor should we be dissuaded from this practice by the fear of becoming unduly visionary. In all ages of the world men like Abraham have been able to amass great wealth while they "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God;" and men like Moses, the greatest statesman in history, have been able to apply themselves to public interests, while they have "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." The richest deeds which have blessed humanity have been wrought by men and women who, while they worked in this world, have shown that their true citizenship was in another world.

This planet increases in attractiveness every day. The opportunities of our current civilization are inspiring to ambitious minds. It is not strange that participants in the life of our times should fondly cling to this earth. But it is evident that we can not live here forever, no matter how attractive a place of residence we may have. It is wise, therefore, to consider whither we are to emigrate when we have finished our mortal course. As we get on in life this policy will appear to have larger importance. We shall experience a slackening interest in this world because of a diminished participation in its activities. As age advances, life becomes chiefly what life has been, and we turn naturally and inevitably to recollections of the past. The friendships of the earlier days have been sundered by the cruel hand of death. New fellowships are virtually made impossible by the very constitution of human life. Memory throws us back upon the companionships of long ago. We ask with longing: "Shall these associations ever be renewed, and if so, under what circumstances?"

It must be confessed that our knowledge of the future life is small. The Bible shows an impressive reserve in dealing with this theme. Christ Himself speaks comparatively little with reference to the retributions and the

compensations of the life beyond. "In this vast and fascinating field of thought," says a great theologian, "it is difficult to be faithful to our ignorance." The disposition to speculate is strong in all of us. The less we know of a mysterious subject the more our imaginations desire to explore it. But we must recognize the limitations of our knowledge, and patiently content ourselves with so much as revelation has disclosed.

Slight as is our precise information on this subject, what we have is based on incontrovertible evidence—the witness of Jesus Christ our Lord. On the strength of His testimony we know that heaven exists, that it is a desirable place, and that it is accessible to those who wish to find it.



"As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country," says the wise man of old. If you have ever awaited the telegraphic flash which you hoped would bring to you the intelligence that a loved one had reached his desired haven on the other side of the globe, or failing that, have scanned the cable reports of the daily press, eager to glean some evidence that a cherished soul had found safe passage across the stormy sea, you have realized the significance of these words. Now, there is a country far from the shores of time, concerning which the whole population of the globe desires information. The columns of foreign intelligence in to-morrow's newspapers may contain little of interest to any of us, but the message which Jesus has communicated to mankind is of deepest concern to all. Ancient navigators maintained that below certain parallels to the south, and beyond certain meridians to the west, the territory of the globe was unknown and unknowable. Many investigators in the realm of the future have reached similar conclusions touching the invisible beyond. Personal friends have slipped over the shoulder of the world, like ships dropping down below the horizon, and have never returned from their voyage, or sent any mes-

sage back to those from whose presence they have disappeared. But here is One who claims to speak with authority, and who asserts that those who make the pilgrimage out into the uncharted spaces may find a habitation of security and peace. Arguments for a future life based on scientific or philosophic grounds have satisfied some minds, but the majority of our fellows have still clamored for personal testimony, and they have received it from One whose witness is incontrovertible. "No man hath ascended up to heaven but He that cometh down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." From Him we receive our sole reliable testimony. In answer to the inquiry of universal humanity, Jesus says, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you."

When Columbus laid his ocean-wide project before King John II of Portugal, that monarch secretly fitted out a ship on his own account and sent it forth upon the sea, ostensibly to the Cape Verde Islands, but really to put the Genoese navigator's claim to proof. But his sailors were not sustained by any such grand purpose as filled the soul of Columbus, and they soon returned in terror, exclaiming, "You might as well expect to find land in the sky as in that waste of waters." In a similar strain have spoken those explorers of the unknown who have depended entirely upon human wisdom. But Jesus comes down from the heavenly world to assert that a place of happiness awaits the faithful. "If it were not so I would have told you." He appeals to his well-known candor in support of His words. He who is the truth can not lie. Would He induce men to love Him and to follow Him with the knowledge that He was deluding them with false expectations? If He could deceive us, we are of all men most miserable. The mind refuses to believe Him capable of foisting an imposture upon the world. His character is above reproach, and on the strength of His words we are confident of the future life. We are not homeless orphans. The soul has an habitation in the Father's house.

By the impregnable word of Jesus we know that heaven is a desirable place. The mere projection of life beyond our present state might be far from fortunate. It is possible to conceive of a future existence which would be quite intolerable, but that which is assured by the will of Christ must be felicitous. "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am ye may be also." There can be no question that what Christ designs for humanity will be entirely satisfactory. We observe what has been prepared for human beings in this present world, and we reason from its wonderful adaptability to the needs of man, that any world which Christ devises for our habitation must be wholly excellent. If an architect should take us over a house he had constructed, and assure us that what he was about to prepare for us would far transcend the building we were inspecting, we should anticipate the result of his labors with exceeding gratification. Thus God shows us our temporary home—the world—and gladdens us with the promise that He has a yet more beautiful and suitable habitation for us in another world. This earth is fine enough for its purpose. To serve the ends of discipline it could not be better adapted to our uses. If we could eliminate sickness and sin, loss and death; if we could escape a body that droops and a brain that grows weary; if we could flee from all that saddens and depresses life, we feel that this world would be satisfactory forever. But Christ informs us, not only that from all the burdens of life we shall be delivered, but also that something far more desirable than this awaits us. This present world is good enough for its appointed ministry, but there is no element of repose in it. We are sojourners looking for a home which can not be dissolved, and this we are promised on the word of Christ. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Of details we are wholly ignorant. We may experience pleasure in giving wing to our fancy, but God has withheld from us specific knowledge of the place which Christ has gone to prepare for us. Indeed, it

would be impossible for our intelligence to grasp the full significance of that delightful locality. The mode of our present existence is so much lower than that of the future will be, that it would be as impossible to teach us its complete meaning as it would be to instruct the butterfly in the character of human life. The apostle John exhausts his rhetoric in the vain attempt to symbolize the glory of the heavenly world which he beheld from the Isle of Patmos. If a perfect disclosure could be made it would be incredible. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." Let the poets soar to such heights as they can attain, they will never compass the wonders of the celestial life. Nor would it be wise for men to be informed of all the glorious features of the heavenly country, even if they were capable of appreciating them. Browning has well said that if a future life were guaranteed, and suicide were known to be justifiable under any circumstances, men would not hesitate to rush from the misery of this world to the rest and felicity of another, whenever the burdens of life became too heavy. The very anticipation of the blessed life, if its joys were understood, would render them unfit for the life of struggle here below. Even now devout persons, pained by the turbulences of this world, with aching hearts long for their release. It is enough for us to know that heaven will be exactly suitable and perfectly satisfactory. And this knowledge we possess beyond a doubt, since Jesus says, "I go to prepare a place for you."

Many figures are employed to symbolize the celestial place. It is called Paradise, of which the Garden of Eden, with its purling brooks, its shady coverts, and its fragrant fruits and flowers, is the type; the Land of Promise, of which Canaan, flowing with milk and honey, is the type; a city, of which Jerusalem, "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth," is the type; a building, of which the gorgeous temple crowning the summit of Mount Moriah is the type; a rest for the

people of God, of which the Sabbath with its holy joys and blessed calm is the type. But better than all is Christ's word, "home," for such indeed is the Father's house. What tender emotions gather about that word! How longingly in distant lands the traveler turns his inner eye toward the place he calls his home! Home! It is a covert from the storm, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, the retreat to which a man withdraws from the furious onset of the world, the shelter in which he takes refuge from the harsh competitions of human society; the place where love fills the atmosphere and perfect understanding pours light upon the troubled mind. Who has not shared the passion of Goldsmith:

"In all my wand' rings round this world of care,  
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—  
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,  
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down.

. . . . .  
I still had hopes, my long vexations past.  
Here to return—and die at home at last."

A home implies social satisfactions. In the Father's house there will be the fullest recognition of the friends from whom we have been sundered for a season. Johnson was delighted at the thought of meeting Shakespeare in that world. Gainsborough rejoiced that there he should consort once more with Van Dyck and other kindred souls. Trollope declared that if he thought Thackeray were not to be there, he should not care to enter. How much it will heighten the glory of heaven to find again the souls to which our own were knitted in this mortal life! But that which assures us that the heavenly society will be congenial is the assertion that Christ Himself will determine its character. "Where I am there ye shall be also." The home which He makes will be free from the contamination of evil. It will be a home from which sorrow is excluded forever. We can vaguely fancy what this present world would be if devoid of sin and with Christ enthroned as supreme ruler. From this conception reason helps us approxi-



mately to understand what the glory of the heavenly world will be. John has supplemented our speculations with words of revelation concerning the people of the better country: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."



That the Father's house is accessible to those who desire to enter is a revelation most grateful to the soul. Many persons long unavailingly to cross the ocean and visit the historic shrines of the old world, and many a Christian dreams hopelessly of one day treading the sacred soil of Palestine. But, while the exploration of interesting portions of the earth's surface is denied to millions of people, the possibility of entering heaven is the inheritance of all who would seek its golden shores; for Jesus says, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." He is coming every day to fulfill this promise to the faithful. Death is the open doorway through which He leads His followers out to the Father's house. Jacob's ladder, reaching from earth to heaven, still provides the ascent to eternal happiness, and it is thronged with angels. Elijah's chariot of fire still makes its journeys to realms of glory. Thousands of confident friends of God walk with Him as did Enoch of old, and disappear from mortal vision, to appear in the home of the soul. Jesus is coming again day by day. When His first disciples reached the end of their earthly course, and one by one they closed their eyes upon the scenes of their toil, they recognized in the sweet release which death brought to them the fulfillment of the Master's promise, "I will come and receive you unto Myself." As they trusted in the assurance of Christ's word, so millions of their successors have rested their expectations upon Him. Hear Rowland Hill singing the faith of Christendom:

"And when I am to die, 'Receive me', I'll cry,  
For Jesus hath loved me, I can not tell why;  
But this I do find, we two are so joined,  
He'll not be in Heaven and leave me behind."

This is the hope of the Christian world. It was said of Socrates that he brought men down from heaven to earth because he diverted their attention from astronomy to philosophy. It is said of Jesus that He lifted men up from earth to heaven, fixing their minds upon celestial glories. Lured by these attractive visions, they seek their Father's house, and when they have entered, what joy will possess their spirits for evermore!

One bright summer day, when the sky was unclouded, and the pellucid waters of Lake Lucerne lay shimmering in the sun, I made my way by steamer to Vitznau, the point at which travelers disembark for the ascent of the Rigi-Kulm. On the forward deck of the little craft more than a hundred humble Swiss people, who were bent upon a holiday, lifted up their voices in Christian song as we approached the end of the voyage. With inspiring heartiness they sent the music ringing out over the waters of the lake, as they poured forth the praise of God in familiar hymns. When the boat reached its destination they hurried ashore with glad hearts, and quickly began to climb the mountain slopes toward the summit, from which a wondrous vision of Alpine glory gladdens the eye of the pilgrim. It seemed to me a type of that joyous entrance into the celestial world which Christ has promised to His faithful followers. Some day the bark which wafts us on toward the celestial shore will drop anchor in the haven of eternal rest. Then with glad hearts we shall sweep to the heights where Christ reigns, from which the soul's eye can survey the incomparable revelation of the divine goodness and study the marvelous adjustments of the Divine Providence. Then shall be fulfilled the saying of the old prophet: "The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

## VI.

# CHRIST AND THE FATHER.

## CHAPTER XIV, 4-11.

If pastors ask the sick what Scripture they desire, it is only a form, for there is one chapter which every man and woman wants to hear in great sorrow, or when the shadow is falling. The leaf which contains the fourteenth chapter of Saint John's gospel should be made movable in our Bibles in order that it might be replaced every ten years. By the time a man has got to middle age that leaf is thinning, and by old age it is only a brown film that is barely legible, and must be gently handled.—*John Watson.*

THE men to whom these words were delivered were not receiving instructions for themselves alone, but representatively for all humanity. They were the trustees of a great inheritance which they were to pass on unimpaired to others. Their simplicity is like that of all men who are the recipients of a revelation too wonderful for the mind to grasp instantaneously. The questions of Thomas and Philip are the petitions of universal mankind. In His teaching, Jesus leads these men from what they have already learned to that which is yet unknown to them, and then advances to higher planes and ampler revelations. He shows them, first, That Christ is the Way to the Father; second, That Christ is the Manifestation of the Father.

### I. CHRIST THE WAY TO THE FATHER. (5-7.)

Peter's question, "Whither goest Thou?" was equivalent to saying, "Let me go with Thee," as is evident from his subsequent words. This request Jesus has declared to be impossible of fulfillment now, though it will be granted at a later period. He tells His disciples that

His departure has the Father's house in view, where He will prepare a place for them. Thither they shall follow in due time, for He is coming to receive them unto Himself. Surely they know the way whither He is going. This He suggests in order to quicken their interest in the deeper revelations to follow. Certainly they ought now to be acquainted with His path of sacrifice and holy purpose, and to perceive the end to which it leads.

Instantly Thomas exclaims, "No; we do not even know whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" He speaks for the entire company, who have not yet realized that the departure of Christ which has been announced to them must be taken in the literal sense of the terms employed. Probably they were not convinced that their Master would be murdered until the tragedy was full upon them. Thomas, with characteristic fondness for explicit statement, and the investigator's eagerness for sound reasons, notwithstanding the despondency into which the plain facts may throw him, asks that the confusion of his mind may be relieved. (Compare xi, 16; xx, 25.) Whither is Jesus about to go? That question puzzled the Jews when Christ said to them, "Ye shall seek Me and shall not find Me." (vii, 34, 35.) Thomas has heard what Jesus has been saying, but does not see how it bears on the present situation. Whither is He going *now*? Until they have learned that they can not be expected to know the way. There is sincerity in what Thomas utters, but not the faith which says, "One step enough for me."

The disciples are still occupied with thoughts of temporal sovereignty. This going away is most perplexing. They share the feelings of their countrymen respecting the Messiah. (Compare xii, 34.) Weeks later they have not lost the same expectation and anxiety which trouble them at this moment. (Compare Acts i, 6.) The Father's house, they think, might mean the headquarters of the Messianic kingdom which Jesus had come to establish. Was there any more likely place for that than Jerusalem?

The answer of Jesus immediately enlarges their vision.

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Thomas has had his eye upon the goal, but Jesus turns his thought to the way and thus gives him a new conception of the end which the path seeks. Jesus is the Way by being the Truth and the Life. He is the Truth and the Life from all eternity. He becomes the Way by taking upon Him the nature of man. "Truth is God revealed in His essence; that is to say, in His holiness and love. Life is God communicated to the soul and bringing to it a holy strength and perfect beatitude."—*Godet*. Christ is the medium through whom truth and life express themselves to the souls of men, and through whom the Father's house and the Father's fellowship are opened to human lives. By His teaching and life, by His death and resurrection, He is the Way. To know Him as Truth, to have Him as Life, is to be in the way. The goal is not heaven, but the Father. Under the influence of this teaching the apostles and those who came under their ministry were wont to characterize the new religion as "the way." (Compare Acts ix, 2; xix, 9, 23; xxii, 4; xxiv, 22.) The disciples knew Jesus, and hence knew the way. But they did not know Jesus as the Way, and hence were ignorant, as they said, until He enlightened them.

"No man cometh unto the Father but by Me" is a claim of surpassing boldness. Who but the Son of God could have ventured to make it! Before the advent of Christ to the earth, He was the "light which lighteneth every man," the Word communicating divine impulses to the thought of seekers after truth, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Not every soul led by Christ is aware of His guidance. In the light of the Christian revelation, Jesus is recognized as the source of fellowship with the Father. (Compare Rom. v, 2; Eph. ii, 18; Heb. vii, 25; x, 19-21.) Jesus tells His disciples that, after receiving His disclosures of truth, they ought to have no difficulty in perceiving His exact relation to the Father. Indeed, they should see in Him the manifestation of God. "If ye had come to know Me," there would have been no need to ask the way or the destina-

tion. "Ye would have known My Father also; and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him." Such words He had more than once uttered in their hearing. (vi, 37, 44; viii, 19; xii, 44, 45.) They were not less perplexing now than formerly. But they were to have elucidation now in response to a disciple's question.

## II. CHRIST THE MANIFESTATION OF THE FATHER. (8-11.)

Thomas is silent, perhaps sustained by that faith which afterward expressed itself so earnestly (xx, 28), but Philip, who has followed Thomas sympathetically, as was natural to one so near to him as the record of their association plainly indicates, now breaks in upon the Master's discourse. The disciples are on terms of beautiful familiarity with their Master when they can talk thus freely with Him. Philip is mentioned four times in this gospel. (i, 44-49; vi, 5-7; xii, 22.) He is a man of hard sense, who sees difficulties no less clearly than Thomas, and who is just as ready to state them. He is one to whom ocular demonstration means much. His challenge of "Come and see" to Nathanael (i, 46) was an expression of the man's practical methods. Jesus had been speaking about the Father. Unquestionably He was qualified to do so. He had come out from the Father. But He has just said that His disciples have seen the Father. How can it be possible that Jesus is speaking soberly in using such language!

"Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." This is the one thing for which the disciples long. There have been theophanies in the past. Jacob, Joshua, Elijah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and others have witnessed them. May not we who have followed Thee be equally privileged? Moses said, "Show me Thy glory" (Ex. xxxiii, 18), and was vouchsafed a transcendent vision. Such a supernatural display would now confirm the faith of these disciples, Philip fancied. He had not beheld the glories of the transfiguration, and probably no intimation of its splendors had reached him. The Jews had sought a sign from heaven, but could not have it because their



motives were unworthy. The new dispensation on which His followers were now about to enter would seem to demand an unusual exhibition of divine power. Was it not right that their unsatisfied cravings should be met? So vexed souls have always cried. Philip is spokesman for the race.

The response of Jesus is a gentle rebuke. He expresses surprise that Philip, whom He significantly addresses by name, should have so painfully missed the meaning of His ministry. He who had been one of the first of the disciples, and who had begun to follow the Master upon Christ's personal invitation and had enjoyed intimate association with Him for three years, ought surely to have made better use of his opportunities. Does not Philip realize that God expresses Himself perfectly, not in displays of power and physical glory, but in exhibitions of holiness and love? This is the kind of theophany the disciples have been witnessing through Christ's entire public life. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He has not seen God in His absolute being: that is an impossibility. (i, 18.) But he has seen God in His relation of Father, as revealed in the mission of Christ. There is pathos in the words Jesus utters at this point. If consciousness of Christ's divinity has not been awakened in His disciples by their fellowship with Him, what hope is there that they will ever come to know God? If Philip had recognized Christ in His true character, he would not have requested a vision of glory.

Seeing their dullness, to which reference is made in various parts of the Gospels, (Matt. xv, 16; xvi, 8; Mark ix, 32; Luke ix, 45; xviii, 34; xxiv, 25; John x, 6; xii, 16), Jesus now probes still deeper to incite faith in Himself. "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" He does not say that He and the Father are one and the same person, but that they exist in an inseparable unity. (x, 30; xvii, 22.) Two kinds of evidence are signified. The words which He speaks are derived from the Father. The works that He performs are wrought by the will of the Father. (v, 19,

30; viii, 26-29, 38; xii, 44.) The words appeal to the spiritual consciousness of His hearers, His works to their intellectual judgments. (v, 36; x, 37, 38.) The words which He speaks need no defense. They ought to convince spiritually-minded persons. But if these are insufficient for minds requiring more elementary instruction, His works supply the demand. Turning from Philip to the whole company, He says, in effect, "What I am ought to convince you; if not, look at My works and believe." The earliest disciples, listening to His words, were ready to acclaim Him the Messiah. (i, 41-49.) Nicodemus, beholding His works, called Him a Divine Messenger. (iii, 2.)

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### The Supreme Satisfaction.

*"Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."*

—JOHN xiv, 8.

The traveler to Pompeii is shown in the temple of Isis the statue of the divinity through whose open lips the credulous worshipers of long ago fancied they obtained trustworthy answers to their petitions. But alongside the ruined shrine he also sees the secret staircase by which the fraudulent priest reached the back of the statue and the concealed pipe through which he murmured the responses of the oracle. Time will uncover every attempt to deceive the world with counterfeit revelations of the Divine Person. A day of reckoning will inevitably confront the false prophet.

For many centuries the world has eagerly besought Christ for a vision of God—and has not been disappointed in His reply. Jesus declares that the answer to humanity's quenchless longing is in Himself. In response to Philip, He says: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, then, Show us the Father?" He would have us understand, and our own intellectual constitution

ought to enable us to understand, that there can be no other way in which a personal God can manifest Himself to personal beings, and that in no other fashion can the character of God be exhibited. Did not Christ give us the highest conception of God's character which could be formed. Would portents in the sky, would convulsions in the earth, would a vast and glorious figure of God aid our apprehension of His character? What is it that you wish as a manifestation of God? Let your mind try to think it out. Let your imagination devise some method by which God may approve Himself to your intelligence. Can anything be conceived more adequate to the soul's need than that God should express Himself in a flawless human life?

When Charles Kingsley was dying he lay silent for a long time, apparently absorbed in profound meditation, but really dwelling upon such a vision of the Eternal as comes to many souls in the hour of their emergence into the life celestial; and then he suddenly exclaimed, with fervent tones, "How beautiful is God!" This is the sure impression made by the Christian revelation upon all whose spiritual intelligence enables them to understand it. The union of infinite strength with infinite love, of perfect wisdom with spotless purity, as manifested in the person of Christ, can not fail to convince the devout soul of the incomparable grandeur of the Divine Character.



In Christ, therefore, we have a revelation of God which satisfies the normal intellectual requirements of men. An intangible God has always been the skeptic's stumbling-block. Bradlaugh, the English infidel, declared that while he was not wise enough to deny the existence of God, he would refuse to believe in a God whose mode of being differed from his own. Christ as the manifestation of God in human life is the sufficient answer to this objection. Would that every doubter could clearly apprehend this fact of revelation!

Ours is a deeply inquisitive age, and it is characterized by impatience. Because deathless questions are not solved the moment they are stated, we see infidelity cutting the cables which hold men to eternal but invisible realities. Many are like the poet Simonides, who, being asked by Hiero, of Syracuse, to define God, requested a day, and then a month, and then a year in which to ponder the question, and finally declined further study, saying, "The longer I pursue it the darker it becomes." It is the same problem which defied human intelligence in the days of Job: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection: It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do; deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea." The Infinite and Absolute is certainly incomprehensible by the reason of man. The agnostic is right when he says that by no process of metaphysics can God be known. If He were cognizable by finite minds He would not be God. Deity is beyond our measure. We can not reach Him; but, being infinite, He can reach us. Having made us in His own image, He can manifest Himself in the human form, and this He does in the person of Christ. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." He "is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person." "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." He "is the image of the invisible God." Here is God adjusted to the spiritual vision of finite beings. Accepted as the one suitable revelation of God in *character*, all intellectual difficulties disappear. To use the words of Bushnell: "Even the atheist feels a presence here, whose simple and pure shining, as it provokes no argument, suffers no answer. The torpors of logic are melted away by the warmth of the life, and he knows God as love before he finds Him as the Absolute of the reason." This is the actual process by which God is discovered in Christ.

"I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ  
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee  
All questions in the world and out of it,  
And hath so far advanced thee to be wise."

This word of Browning is as true as if it were written by the finger of God on the forefront of heaven, for in Him are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." In Him all the interests of life have their explanation. In Him all the hopes of humanity have their fulfillment. Upon Him converge all lines of inquiry. From Him radiate all streams of wisdom and blessing. God has given one answer to all the demands of the human spirit. O that the doubter who can not find God would only look at Christ, and let love be his interpreter! How quickly the gates of day would open, and light flash upon the problems of life!



In Christ we have a revelation of God which satisfies the moral sense of mankind. Without such a manifestation man could never get a wholesome conception of God's character; and it is a very important matter that the worshiper should have a God whom he can respect as well as venerate. A modern infidel, mutilating Pope's celebrated aphorism, has said, "An honest God's the noblest work of man." Stripped of its irreverence, this statement contains a great truth, for if a man's notion of God be puerile his whole religious life will be disastrously affected. But men can not be trusted to construct a worthy God without a revelation of His true character. The history of heathenism, which has reduced Deity to monstrous animal forms or exaggerations of human beings, demonstrates the truth of this declaration. In the deepest pagan degradation men have "changed the glory of God into an image made like to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things." On the higher levels of heathenism they have ordinarily stretched human qualities into gigantic proportions, put them together without much attention to eternal fitness,

and made gods that were simply portentous elaborations of mankind. Even when aided by partial divine revelations, the Hebrew people frequently portrayed God in figures which offend the moral sense of humanity. They attribute to Deity passions so distinctly human that we see frequently only a carnal god. In modern times the English Puritans have reflected the earliest Hebrew conceptions of Jehovah. What is Milton's "Paradise Lost" but the history of royal councils, conquests, plans, maneuvers, only differing from like actions on the earth in that they are conducted on a vaster scale and in the celestial world? M. Taine, the clever French critic of our English literature, could properly say, "Milton's Jehovah is a great king who maintains a suitable state, something like Charles I." Even Christian theologians have been betrayed into similar caricatures of Deity. Modern skepticism has its quarrel, not so much with the true God as with the travesties of Deity which misguided religious writers have drawn. Peruse the publications of the most influential agnostic of America, now some years deceased, and observe that it is not the Christian God who is being assailed, but the grotesque and immoral creation of theological partisans. Under the influence of such misrepresentations, many persons share the judgment of the child who said, "This would be a pretty good world if it were not for God and the policemen." Here is a misconception of God which construes Him to be chiefly the vindicator of moral order; a stern, unyielding dignitary, who sways the scepter of His authority much as a custodian of the peace swings his club.

In the person of Jesus Christ God corrects human misconceptions of His character, and shows His administration to be paternal rather than monarchical. What good men want to believe generally comes true in the end, and the ultimate truth is often finer than their dreams. The race has always possessed the desire to believe in the Fatherhood of God, but, apart from the Christian revelation, no man has ever harbored the thought of such a divine fatherhood as Christ came to



make manifest. His constant reiteration of His own consciousness of the Divine Fatherhood, His perpetual identification of humanity with Himself in this personal, filial relationship, as illustrated in the Sermon on the Mount, in the giving of the Lord's Prayer, and such utterances as, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father," forbid hesitation in acknowledging that God is a true Father in the deepest, closest, personal meaning. Sin may lead us to doubt whose sons we are, but there can never be any question who our Father is.

A business man, hurrying from the city to his home in the country one night, was more than commonly courteous to the bootblack on the ferryboat who polished his shoes, entering into conversation with him and speaking many words of kindly interest in the lad. He observed afterwards that the boy never saw him without wistfully approaching him; that he would pick up his bundles from the floor, brush off his clothing without being asked and without expectation of reward, and in many ways constantly displayed an affectionate concern for his welfare which was quite unusual. The man was so deeply impressed by these attentions that he finally asked the boy what inspired them, and the lad replied, "Why, once you called me 'My child,' up to that time I thought I was nobody's child. I will do anything for you, sir." Thus the heart of the wretched boy had been touched by the feeling that a strong man cared for him. So Christ has made it perfectly evident that God is intimately concerned for the welfare of His creatures, and by His revelation of the divine heart has corrected the misconceptions of humanity touching the character of God. The divine will is exerted not only to rule us, but to restore us to fellowship with our Father.



It will thus be seen that in Christ we have a revelation of God which satisfies the affections of men. In Him God steps out of that hazy impersonality in which philosophy has always enshrouded Him, into clear, dis-

distinct, and loving individuality. He is not that indefinable, intangible Somewhat which the intellect has conceived Him, but the eternal Someone whom the heart craves. Personal relations have been established between the invisible God and the individual human being. The whole nature of man demands a God who will agree to such intercourse. And here He is set forth in Jesus Christ. He does not correspond precisely to the metaphysician's concept, the poet's dream, or the naturalist's picture, though He has something in common with each of these. They have only expressed a fraction of the truth; they could go no further. But here is God in common life to answer all the soul's deepest longings. Such a manifestation was not necessary to teach man reverence for the power, the majesty, the greatness of God. Nature with her ten thousand tongues has taught all this. The swinging worlds proclaim it.

"In reason's ear they all rejoice,  
And utter forth a glorious voice;  
Forever singing as they shine,  
'The hand that made us is divine.'"

What was unknown—what never could have been known without the revelation of Christ—is that God is infinite tenderness, and that He will draw nigh to every human heart, that He will so stoop and adjust Himself to the condition of every soul as to meet its most particular need, that He is a personal God to every person, his own Father to every child. The fact is most clearly phrased in the words of a modern writer: "Atheism says, 'No God;' Deism, 'a God;' Christianity, 'my God.'"

What a miserable picture of God has Mohammed given us in the dream of his celestial journey. When within ten bowshots of the eternal throne, the hand of God reached forth and touched him upon his shoulder and he felt a chill which penetrated to his heart. That is not the God whom Christ reveals. Genial warmth is the essential element of the Divine Person. As the mighty sun supplies the wants of the luxuriant foliage in the tropics and fulfills the desires of the delicate little

flowers blooming in crevices forever sheeted by Alpine snows, so God, the beneficent, the genial, the all-loving, pours Himself out to meet the soul's demands in every condition of life.

Thus God passes within the range of human sympathy. In Christ He has shown us that the world was never far adrift in supposing that human life was in some sense an expression of the divine mode of being. Men were not wrong in fancying certain resemblances between God and themselves, but in failing to invest Him with proper attributes, and to apprehend Him as holiness and love. Christ will convince those who accept Him as the ultimate revelation of God that the Infinite does relate Himself personally to all the experiences of men. No logic can prove this declaration, but a spiritual fellowship with Christ will evidence it.

On a famous bridge spanning the river which flows through an Austrian city there are twelve statues of Jesus, representing Him in various characteristic vocations of life. There is Christ as physician, teacher, carpenter—Christ in twelve separate callings. The weary men who cross this bridge at morning, noon, and night may turn their eyes toward a semblance of that Christ who, touching human experience at every point, has brought God within the compass of every devout heart willing to receive Him. It is this universality of Christ's adaptation to the needs of men which constrains them to see in Him the perfect manifestation of God. When once this conviction has seized a man, he will ignore the metaphysical difficulties which pure reason may suggest and, out of his consciousness that Christ fulfills the deepest requirements of his nature, he will exclaim with the hesitant but loyal disciple of old, "My Lord and my God!"

## VII.

### CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES—POWER.

#### CHAPTER XIV, 12-17.

It is the supreme service of the Fourth Evangelist that he interpreted the vision of faith by the light of the Gospel story. He insured for all time that the Christ of inward experience should be no ideal abstraction, but the living Master who had once been manifest in the flesh.

—E. F. Scott.

As JESUS concluded His words concerning His relation to the Father (5-11), His mind turned naturally to His relations with His disciples, from whom He was about to be separated. And as He has been speaking of His own works in their significance as evidence, His thought moves on to the works which His disciples will accomplish when He has departed. These works will not only provide additional evidence of His power and authority, but they will also afford proof of the continuance of His personal ministry among those who confess His name. The inquiries of Thomas and Philip have temporarily shifted His address from the motive of imparting comfort with which it began. Having finished the topics for the moment to which these interruptions diverted Him, Jesus now returns to the consolations which He has to offer His despondent followers. In addition to a future reunion under circumstances of highest joy, He promises them a perpetual and unbroken fellowship with Him through the Spirit, which will result in making their lives effective beyond all human comparison. In this fact they will experience a sense of divine nearness which will greatly relieve the sorrow occasioned by His removal. He gives them, 1. An assurance of power for great achievement, 2. A description of the elements of power available to them.

## I. THE PROMISE OF POWER. (12.)

Christ's "verily, verily" here as elsewhere marks the introduction of a theme which is remarkable in itself, and which for that reason requires emphasis to carry it into the minds of those to whom it will appear difficult of apprehension. "The works that I do" are miracles of the same kind that Jesus has been performing, such as the apostles indeed were permitted to do after His departure, and which were assignable directly to their fellowship with Him. (Acts iii, 16.)

"Greater works than these" can not mean works of the same kind and of greater magnitude, since from the human point of view there can not be any greater miracle than the raising of the dead. The words may be taken to refer in one sense to the extent of the works yet to be accomplished by the disciples and their successors. Christ's works during His earthly life were confined to Palestine, and they were limited to a small measure of apparent success. His ministers would sweep over the whole world and achieve incalculable results. Moreover, their works would be wrought in a different realm, and would consist of a superior quality. Jesus spoke forgiveness to a few souls, and altered the lives of some persons who yielded themselves to His influence, but Peter on the day of Pentecost, Paul throughout the Roman world, and their successors in the triumphant career of the Church, would witness such consequences of their efforts as never gladdened the heart of Jesus. Nevertheless, such works are Christ's works, being wrought only through faith in His name. "He that believeth on Me" shall do them (12).

It seems strange to attribute these greater works to the departure of Christ to the Father until one realizes that it is the exaltation of Christ in His humanity to the right hand of God which guarantees the fulfillment of the promise of power, and that only in that position, by intercession and direct impartation of spiritual help, can Christ enable His disciples to continue and surpass His own works, which were wrought under the limita-

tions of His fleshly life. These words mark the transition from the promise of power to the consideration of those agencies by which power will be made available to Christ's disciples.

## II. THE ELEMENTS OF POWER. (13-17.)

The greater works will not be accomplished without reliance on divine assistance, which will be attainable through prayer in the name of Christ, and through fellowship with the Spirit of Truth whom the Father will send. (1) Asking in Christ's name (13, 14). "Whatsoever" opens up a field of possibilities only limited by the disciples' compliance with the conditions which Christ prescribes. The believer asks, and the omnipotent Lord answers from His throne of power. The phrase, "in My name" is used in xiv, 26; xv, 16; xvi, 23, 24, 26. In the present instance and elsewhere it contains several shades of meaning. To ask in the name of Christ is not merely to employ a formula, such as, "through Jesus Christ our Lord," or "for Christ's sake," but to ask by His authority and on the basis of His claims to be heard. It involves identification of personal interest with Him. It is to pray in the consciousness of fellowship with Him, entering into His mind, voicing His desires, conforming to the spirit of His own words, "not My will but Thine be done." Such a prayer will be consistent with the character of Christ, and will seek the ends which His mission on earth had in view.

The answer to such a prayer is assured: "That will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (Compare xi, 4; xiii, 31.) No prayer which does not seek the Father's glory can be offered in Christ's name. The Father is glorified through the completion of the work which He gave His Son to perform, that is, the salvation of men. "I will do it" teaches us that prayer is not only to be offered in Christ's name, but also to Him.

(2) Fellowship with the Spirit of Truth (15-17). Christ promises that prayer will be offered by Himself



in behalf of His disciples, and that it will be answered in the gift of another Paraclete, even the Spirit of Truth. Through Him comfort will be administered in relief of the sorrow they feel because of their Master's removal, and power will be afforded for the execution of the work which will fall to their lot.

But the fulfillment of this promise is conditioned upon their acceptance of the terms which Jesus proposes. "Keep My commandments," or "Ye will keep My commandments, if ye love Me." On this basis the new bestowal will be made. If the disciples will do their part on earth Jesus will do His in heaven—"on the one hand loving obedience, on the other loving intercession."

The word "Comforter" is so grateful to believers that it seems like robbery to exclude it. All that is consoling in the term may be retained, though the word "Advocate" more nearly conveys the meaning of the original, "Paraclete." A paraclete is one called to the side of another, to render assistance, to offer counsel, to plead as in a court. (1 John ii, 1.) It carries with it also the thought of support, and hence of comfort. The connection in which the word is used will determine its meaning in each instance.

"Another Paraclete," implies that Jesus Himself filled this beautiful office. In His absence an additional helper would appear, but not in such a sense as to supplant Christ (18). (Compare Matt. xviii, 20; Rom. viii, 9.) Jesus would have His disciples understand what a plenitude of divine help was always at their command. A Supporter would ever be within reach, a Counsellor in the difficulties of life, a Consoler for the sufferings of their mortal state, a Sustainer in times of moral weakness.

This Paraclete would abide with them forever, in contrast with the withdrawal of Jesus from their sight. "The Spirit of Truth" helps to interpret the meaning of "Paraclete." Truth is naturally related to the thought of advocating a cause. (Compare xv, 26; xvi, 13; 1 John v, 6.) The world can not receive Him, because it beholds Him not. (1 Cor. ii, 14.) To the unspiritual the Spirit is unreal, a figment of the imagination. They have no sym-

pathy with Him, and hence can not discover His being or avail themselves of His power. But the disciples, who have experienced the spiritual fellowship of Christ, and have entered into communion with His life, recognizing its inspiration and power as of God, already know the Spirit of Truth, and with them He will abide forever. They realize His presence even now, and after the Master's promise has been fulfilled, as it will be on the day of Pentecost, they will experience the fuller measures of divine help and encouragement which God has in store for them.

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### Wonderful Works.

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto My Father.*—JOHN xiv, 12.

Wonderful works like those of Christ were undoubtedly wrought by the early apostles. Could such things be done now? If so, why are they not accomplished? If they are not done now it is not because they are *impossible*, but because they are *unimportant*. God has not one power for one age and another power for another age. Under circumstances which would make them desirable, miracles of physical healing could doubtless be wrought to-day. It is not unlikely that they have been performed in modern times. But circumstances which require such works do not exist in any large degree. Healing is now accomplished by scientific processes, based upon a better understanding of the laws of nature and the constitution of man; and these restorations have the same wonderful aspects, so far as the results are concerned, as if they were performed in a way quite mysterious to us. Our ability to explain the method by which these effects are produced sometimes robs them of their otherwise marvelous character. Nevertheless, the results are just as wonderful as though accomplished

by magic or some other preternatural agency. The end secured by the administration of medicine or the performance of a surgical operation is dependent upon the same energy or power, whether it be called natural or supernatural, which brings success to the miracle-worker. It is a divine force which makes a drug effective in the human organism, or which knits the separated surfaces of a broken bone. The surgeon is not working like a carpenter or joiner when he repairs the fracture, nor is the physician simply mixing a compound when he unites the medicinal properties with the elements of the body. It is God working through His own laws who knits the fracture, and makes the medicine effective. Man has simply learned how to accommodate himself to these laws, and he is the most skillful physician or surgeon who knows best how to adjust himself to the Eternal Mind. Cures which in any former age would have been regarded as miraculous are perpetually being accomplished in a way which seems natural to us because we have some appreciation of the subtle laws by which they are accomplished. The physical miracle has therefore largely lost its importance in all civilized countries.

When we bring a Christian civilization to heathen lands we do not attempt to perform miracles, but, through processes known to enlightened people, we do work cures which to the heathen mind have the effect of being miraculous. We send trained nurses and skilled physicians and surgeons to the pagan peoples in the name of Christ, so that the beneficiaries of our ministry of healing realize that we are actuated by a divinely inspired sympathy. A writer in Calcutta has recently confirmed the truth of this statement: "It is not too much to say that the miracles of Christ are apparently almost paralleled by the work of the medical missionary to-day. To a people who know so little as these do of Western medical science, the cure of many diseases and the performing of many operations belong clearly to the realm of the miraculous. The kindly helpfulness of the medical missionary is a concrete presentation of the spirit of the

Gospel." It is important that the bodies of these unfortunate people should be healed, and that their lives should be improved in every possible way. It is not important that these results should be secured through the performance of miracles. It is far nobler to impress the heathen mind that these beautiful ministries are a work of sacrifice for Christ's sake than it would be to amaze them with incomprehensible marvels.



It is well for us to understand how much value Jesus attached to miracles, and how large a place we should ascribe to them in the Christian scheme. He unquestionably gave them a secondary place in the scale of testimony. Evidence of first importance lay in His words and in His character. If men had spiritual perception enough to see the sublimity of His teachings and the grandeur of His character, they would have evidence enough of His divinity; but because all men were not capable of such spiritual insight, He did rest upon His works for testimony, which He declared did establish the fact of His essential unity with the Father. But when He points to His works as evidence of His divinity, it is plain that He does so chiefly because the obtuse spiritual perceptions of man required it. He says to His own disciples, "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; or else believe Me for the very works' sake."

The larger significance of Christ's miracles, apart from their evidence of His profound compassion for suffering humanity, lies in the fact that they were "signs," as John tells us, of higher spiritual works which He would effect in the characters of men. When He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, restored the blind and the lame, brought the dead to life, He was showing in a symbolical fashion His power to give spiritual health and eternal life to the souls of sin-stricken humanity.

Jesus declares that "greater works than these shall he do" who believes. Certainly He did not mean that

His apostles would do greater works of the same kind as those which He had been accomplishing. While they evidently performed such works as Jesus wrought, they did not, because they could not, accomplish anything more wonderful in the same class. The mind can not conceive of anything superior to the works of Jesus in the physical realm. *Greater* works, therefore, must mean more excellent works—works with a larger value—works belonging to another category, in which Jesus confessedly did not achieve much. Comparatively few persons experienced any spiritual effects from His ministry. But His disciples would witness the spiritual transformation of thousands of human beings. When on the day of Pentecost, under the preaching of an uncultured fisherman, whose discourse was largely composed of quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures, they saw three thousand persons of many climes and various associations suddenly converted to the faith of Christ, they must have realized that the process of doing greater works than Jesus had accomplished had now begun with magnificent demonstrations of divine power. When they and their successors, sallying forth into the Roman Empire, saw the vast superstructure of that splendid realm gradually reduced to the sovereignty of Jesus Christ, they could readily see the fulfillment of their Master's promise that they should do greater works than Himself.

A little while ago there died in Australia one of the world's greatest heroes, John G. Paton, who witnessed the redemption of the New Hebrides, a group of islands in the Pacific, formerly inhabited by the most brutal savages on earth. Thousands of converts were made during his ministry to these barbarians. Great churches were filled with devout worshipers. Cannibalism disappeared under the magic touch of Christian life. More than once the assassin's weapon was thrust aside from the breast of this noble missionary by the power of his saintly words, while the soul of the intended murderer was transformed by the grace of Christian truth.

On a tablet reared to the memory of Dr. John Geddie at Aneityum, these words may be read: "When he landed

in 1848 there were no Christians; when he left in 1872 there were no heathens."

The imagination fails to realize what Jesus would have experienced in His own divine-human spirit if He could have witnessed, as the result of His personal ministry, the marvels of Pentecost, the wonders of primitive apostolical history, or the amazing results of modern missionary movements.



The temper of our age is liable to lead us astray respecting the relative values of modern achievement. A very considerable number of persons, and among them some who are justly called Christians, are betrayed into feeling that the enlargement of what we call civilization by the products of industry and intelligence is the supreme work of modern times. To such minds the building of ships and railways, the rearing of vast structures, the construction of bridges and tunnels, and other appliances of our current life which benefit the world materially, are of vast importance because they develop society, make life more various, and effort more successful, and thus contribute to increase the sum of human happiness. All these are of great value, and are fittingly celebrated in the monuments which everywhere rise to proclaim their greatness. But we must remember that there is no more loving-kindness in the world because we have the telephone, the telegraph, and other great evidences of material advancement. Commerce has no feeling, architecture and engineering do not possess sympathy. There is no more gentleness, justice, humanity in the world because of our wonderful development in civilization. If these beautiful qualities are more apparent to-day than ever it is because some other force than that of material advancement has produced them.

There are others who hail education as the supreme accomplishment of our age, and the gifts of multi-millionaires, which make possible the more extensive diffusion of intelligence, are esteemed of the highest worth.



To others every reputable scheme for social improvement is the highest good. To such Lincoln's work of emancipation, the heroic liberation of serfs by the Czar of Russia, the noble enterprises of our day for securing the industrial freedom of the masses, are of the highest significance, and poets will continue to commemorate them with rapturous panegyrics.

As we mention these things we are conscious of rising in the scale of moral values. It is certainly a greater thing to educate humanity than to enlarge civilization on its material side. And it is certainly a higher work to free serfs, that they may rise from ignoble conditions, than merely to educate the remnant of humanity whose material prosperity enables them to cultivate their minds. But from the truly Christian standpoint it is still greater to effect a moral regeneration, to cleanse the souls of men, to purify their characters, to make them godlike, and in Christ's view this is the supreme thing.

Unquestionably this supreme thing can be pursued in conjunction with other things of great importance. A good man may serve God by building bridges and piercing tunnels, and rearing edifices, and by otherwise employing the material advantages of civilization. Certainly education and culture and social reform may be urged by him whose chief aim is to glorify God. Nor is there any doubt that spiritually minded men will be invigorated by their Christian faith for the performance of all these important works of civilization, some of which indeed find their chief source of inspiration in the religion of Jesus Christ. The simple question with every Christian is, whether he will confine himself to these comparatively subordinate things, or whether he will give himself through these things to the highest of all works—the saving of souls. This is not the question which Christ asked alone. It is not the question which the Christian feels forced upon him by his conscience alone. It is the question which civilization itself is asking. Our civilization, penetrated as it is by the spirit of modern culture, impregnated as it is by the genius of social advancement, charged as it is with an ever-widening

philanthropy—our civilization—the best the world has ever known—will slowly and steadily slip down to perdition if it be not sustained by the souls of saved men and women. While we are laying the flattering unction to our souls that we are aiding in the upbuilding of society and the kingdom of God through the contributions we are making to our modern civilization, let us ask ourselves whether we are investing our energies where they will pay the highest dividends, or whether we are consuming those energies on works which, though valuable, are of subordinate importance when compared with the saving of souls. If the civilization of the twentieth century fails to redeem itself from iniquity, shall we be able to face God, shall we be able to face humanity in the Day of Judgment, unless we have wrought to our utmost for the spiritual welfare of our fellows?

A newspaper writer, commenting on the craven conduct of the officers of the *Larchmont*, which went down in Long Island Sound not long since, compared it with the valorous spirit of Captain Luce of the *Arctic* more than fifty years ago, who remained with his ship until she sank into the depths of the sea. It was not his fault that he survived. He was rescued, by no attempt of his own, from the waves in which he had been engulfed, but he passed his remaining days in avoiding society. Though it was no fault of his that he was living, he was ashamed to be alive while his passengers were dead. If, by the grace of God, we find ourselves in the home of the saved, rescued by infinite love, will it not tinge the happiness of heaven with bitterness to reflect that, while we have escaped destruction, we did little or nothing to rescue the perishing?

Where our personal affections are involved the relative values of deeds are more accurately fixed. Your son is entering upon a downward career. Slowly but surely he has sagged to the depths of deadly degradation. Is there anything more precious than his soul? Would you not surrender a fortune to redeem his life? Would you not give yourself for him? And if he is finally

rescued, what work of antiquity or of modern times would you set over against that deliverance? Would the building of the Pyramids, the piercing of the Alps, the founding of a State, or even the making of a world, seem to you as great an achievement as the salvation of that son?



If our affections are not so deeply involved in respect of the spiritual welfare of men as they are in respect of their bodily safety, it is because we do not believe their spiritual peril is as great as the peril of that brave fireman who, the other day, after hours of agony, was extricated from the debris of the burning building; or as the peril of that miner who, after days of suffering in a living tomb, was brought out more dead than alive by the heroic efforts of his comrades; or the peril of those unfortunate people who a few days ago went down into the boiling waters of the sea. But what is the greatest catastrophe in human history? It is not the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum by the belching fires of Vesuvius, nor the shattering of San Francisco, nor the engulfing of Lisbon by the deadly earthquake, nor the wasting of Jamaica and the annihilation of men and treasure. It is the loss of spiritual life by millions of the race. Said Cardinal Manning: "The Church holds that it were better for the sun and moon to drop from heaven, for the earth to fail and for all the many millions who are upon it to die of starvation in extremest agony, so far as temporal affliction goes, than that one soul, I will not say should be lost, but should commit one single venial sin, should tell one willful untruth, though it harmed no one, should steal one poor farthing without excuse." That apparently extreme statement must be nearly right. Remember that God plundered the universe for the most priceless possession in it—Christ, the Eternal Son of God—and lavished Him upon the task of saving men from their sins. It must, therefore, be certain that any departure from the life of holiness is sufficiently tragic to demand the death of Christ. If

this be true, and it can not be denied, then the saving of individuals is the supreme task which can engage the thought and energy of the great and the good. If, now, you believe that the greatest thing in the world is to save souls, if you are in love with Christ's great business, thank God that you may accomplish it; for power to do it has been granted to you by the words of the Master Himself: "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to My Father." "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." "He that believeth on Me" shall do these great works. He that believes on Me as the branch believes in the vine, as the vine believes in the earth, as the bird believes in the air, as the fish believes in the sea, as the babe believes in his mother, drawing vitality from her breast, strength from her caressing hand, comfort from her crooning cradle-song—he that believes in Me in this dependent and altogether trustful way—the works that I do shall he do, and greater works than these shall he do—this is what Christ means, and the devout soul is thrilled with the sublimity of the prospect.

## VIII.

### CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES—PERSONAL MANIFESTATION.

#### CHAPTER XIV, 18-24.

If the Son of God did say and do the things recorded in this document, then everything in the universe, every fact in the history of the world, the conclusions of all philosophy, the meaning of all scientific discovery, the future of the world, and the goal of humanity, must be affected by its disclosures.—*H. R. Reynolds.*

It is not enough for these disciples to know that at Christ's request the Father will send another Helper. If they are permanently to lose their Lord, they are still inconsolable. Jesus understood how dependent upon Him His disciples were. Inspiring as was the promise of the Paraclete, no assurance of another coming could satisfy hearts craving the personal presence of Jesus. He treats them with exquisite tenderness as befits His character and their needs. "I will not leave you orphans," He says to them. The rendering "comfortless" is not satisfactory, since it gives undue support to the translation, "Comforter," in verse sixteen, which is too limited in meaning. It is the same word which is translated "fatherless" in James i, 27. Though Jesus was brother to these disciples in the most beautiful sense, yet He calls them "little children." (xiii, 33.) It is the language of a father about to leave his household. In the words which follow, Jesus gives them, first, An assurance of His personal manifestation; second, A definition of the mode of this manifestation.

#### I. THE ASSURANCE OF PERSONAL MANIFESTATION. (18-21.)

"I am coming to you" is better than "I will come to you." How well adapted are these words to inspire the disciples! Jesus has always been able to meet their

emergencies triumphantly. The problems of the future can readily be solved under His guidance. The memory of His instruction would be much, but His presence will be everything to them. Probably they understood Him to mean that He would return to them in bodily form, though the fact of His resurrection was not clearly anticipated by them. Much discussion has arisen concerning the exact significance to be attached to Christ's coming. Does He here refer to the coming announced in verse three, which some have taken to mean the *Parousia*—the final coming? This interpretation seems to be forbidden by the words in verse nineteen. Does it signify His own bodily resurrection, which is so soon to occur? That would appear impossible in view of the fact of His final withdrawal a few weeks after His resurrection would then leave them disappointed and more desolate. Perhaps the words can not be confined to any specific application; but their fulfillment begins with Christ's resurrection, when His humanity is glorified, and continues through the outpouring of His Holy Spirit in the experience of the Church of all ages. The coming of the Spirit in the fullness of Pentecost is the return of Christ Himself.

Jesus affirms that in "a little while" the world will not behold Him. He has been seen superficially by the people of His generation. This sight will soon be extinguished forever. He has been seen by His disciples with a measure of spiritual apprehension. He is yet to be seen by them and all believers with a perfectly clear vision, such as the world can not experience. He will grant His disciples perpetual fellowship with Him through the Spirit. The earnest of this deeper communion will be given by His resurrection from the dead.

"Because I live, ye shall live also." In their enriched spiritual life they will have the surest evidence that Christ lives, even after He has been removed from them, and this exalted spiritual experience will be their proof of the perpetuation of their own lives through the power which Christ claims for Himself. (v, 21, 26; xi, 25, 26; Gal. ii, 20.)



Their acquaintance with this life will be certified when the Spirit is given on the day of Pentecost. "At that day" of outpouring they will realize for themselves what now they receive on the word of the Master—that Christ is in the Father, that they are in Christ, and that Christ is in them. He had already given them a part of this truth (10), but presently they will perceive that this divine fellowship includes themselves. (xvii, 21-23; 1 John iii, 24.)

In verse 21 we see that the evidence of this spiritual fellowship in their experience will consist of "(1) Loving obedience to Christ, (2) increasing sense of the Father's love, (3) a growing knowledge of Christ as the revelation of God."—*McClymont*. (Compare vii, 17.) It is one thing to have an appreciation of Christ's commandments, and another thing to express them in conduct. "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them" will demonstrate His love. In verse 15 we had love as the source of obedience. Here we have obedience as the proof of love. To those who show loving obedience Christ will manifest Himself. The verb employed is one of the strongest John could select to indicate the clearness with which Christ would appear in the soul of the believer.

## II. THE MODE OF PERSONAL MANIFESTATION. (22-24.)

There is still an unsettled question about this manifestation, and it is voiced by Judas, "the son of James" (Luke vi, 16; Acts i, 13), also called Thaddeus or Lebbeus (Matt. x, 3; Mark iii, 18), of whom nothing more is known. The care of John to distinguish him from Iscariot is impressive and characteristic of the writer. "What is come to pass that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us and not unto the world?" exclaims Jude. There is still a mingling of earthly conceptions in the disciples' thought of Christ's kingdom, in which there was expectation of a public and glorious exhibition of the Messiah's sovereignty to judge the Gentiles and restore the kingdom of Israel in fulfillment of prophecy as they

understood it. Jesus has been speaking of an inner manifestation to themselves—but what of a spectacular revelation to the world? Has He changed His purpose in that regard? Jude's question has something of the same spirit which actuated Christ's brethren. (vii, 3, 4.) "Show Thyself to the world" is the demand of many in our times who do not appreciate the conditions under which Christ's manifestations must be made.

Jesus does not pause to explain the inexplicable. Spiritual meanings are to be experienced rather than categorically defined. He follows the method so frequently illustrated in John's Gospel of affirming anew and elaborating the truth which provoked the question. (Compare iii, 5-8; iv, 14; vi, 44-51, 53, etc.) His reply to Jude is practically a repetition of what He has just been saying (21). He thus draws the mind of the disciple back from the wandering thought of public glory to the important truth of spiritual fellowship, which is not for the world, but for those who keep the word of Christ.

"We will come unto Him and make our abode with Him," is a clear assertion of Christ's divinity. The Jews were familiar with the thought of God dwelling with His people. (Ex. xxv, 8; xxix, 45; Zech. ii, 10, etc.) Jesus expresses a communion which is distinctly personal, a spiritual fellowship with individual hearts which is dependent upon the loving obedience of believers. Herein lies the reason He can not manifest Himself to the world. It has no sympathy with His commandments, and hence no love for Him. (xv, 18.)

His word is the message of the gospel and, therefore, the word of His Father, as He has frequently affirmed. To receive it insures communion with Him and the Father; to reject it is to exclude one's self from this divine fellowship (24). Here the specific teaching for the disciples about their Lord's personal manifestation after the withdrawal of His bodily presence ceases for the time, and Jesus reverts to the purpose of consolation with which He began this address.

### A Divine Demonstration.

*He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.*—JOHN xiv, 21.

Tissot, the great French illustrator of the Bible, began his work on subjects which were not sacred. One day while attending service in the church of San Sulpice, in order to obtain ideas for one of his pictures, he closed his eyes in meditation during an impressive part of the worship, and saw a vision of the Christ which transformed his life and gave his art a totally new objective. The experience of that mystical illumination he attempted to transfer to canvas in his picture called "Inward Voices," but he determined to reproduce its spirit repeatedly in all the varied events of Christ's human life. He would not portray the conventional Jesus, but the Man of Nazareth as He must have appeared in ancient Palestine. He journeyed to that sacred land and familiarized himself with every detail of the people and their surroundings which could assist him in depicting the real Jesus. He was resolved to come as near to the Master as possible. The result is a series of pictures in which Jesus lives and moves before us with perfect naturalness and fidelity to the characteristics of the age and clime in which He appeared.

The artist's desire is shared by the devout Christian. He can not approach too close to his Master. When he reaches the actual words of Christ he experiences a satisfaction which he does not derive from any other words of Scripture. He feels that he is getting nearer to the heart of God than when he listens to the poets, the prophets, the historians, the apostles. This is not because he thinks these writers are not inspired of God. He may believe that every word of Scripture is of equal divine authority, whether it be in the Old Testament or the New, whether it be doctrinal or narrative.

Nevertheless, there is a sense of security and solidity in the actual words of Jesus which, in a way difficult to express, distinguishes them from other inspired words. He feels a delicate shade of superior veneration for them. Human words are in a sense the bodying forth of the human spirit, and divine words are the expression of the Divine Spirit. They bring one sensibly near to the speaker. The phonographic reproduction of a speech by Gladstone, or of a song by some melodist long since invisible, seems to bring us into fellowship with the personalities whose utterances we hear. An autograph letter of Lincoln or of Washington produces the same effect upon our minds. The sentences we read are precisely as those illustrious men formed them. They were a part of their being as truly as a tress of hair so carefully treasured is a precious part of a beloved form once walking with us in the pilgrimage of life. So we feel about the veritable words of Jesus. No paraphrase can be so satisfactory. No doctrines developed from them can touch us quite so intimately. The words of Christ are as near to Christ as we fancy we can come, and since every devout Christian longs to have as clear a sense of Christ's presence as possible, he cherishes these words, he meditates upon them, he repeats them to himself and feels that in so doing he is making Christ very real to himself, and in this he is not deceived.

But Jesus promised that He would manifest Himself with perfect clearness to His disciples. He said that He would come out into brilliant distinctness of vision. But this manifestation, He declared, would not be made indiscriminately. There would be many persons who would not receive it because they could not. "Yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me." When He had made this statement to His disciples, Jude, who could not fathom these strange words, started up and said: "What has come to pass that You will do this? Have You changed your plans so that You will manifest Yourself to us, but not to the world?" He was looking for some exhibition of divine splendor which should convince every beholder

that Jesus was what He declared Himself to be. Then Jesus responded, "If a man love Me he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make our abode with him." That certainly means that to those who are ready to receive Him Christ will make such a revelation of Himself as shall be more convincing and satisfying than any person can have who saw Him in the flesh or beheld Him glorified, as three of His disciples did, on the Mount of Transfiguration. This promise is made to all who desire a manifestation of Christ to their souls. The conditions under which it may be obtained and the mode by which it will be effected are made plain by the teaching of Jesus.



That Christ should lay down some condition on which a personal manifestation would be made is perfectly natural. It conforms to the very necessities of the soul. We never get any real knowledge without accepting the provisions under which such knowledge is obtainable. Actual knowledge is never born with us, and it is never thrust upon us. It is always secured by complying with certain approved requirements. Vague impressions of truth may come to us unsought. We may be familiarized superficially with a common sort of information, but we never know a thing truly until we have acquired it by purposeful search. We get some notion of nature from the forms which fall under our unreflecting gaze. But Nature is always saying to us, "If you wish me to manifest myself to you, you must observe the laws under which such a manifestation is possible. You must put yourself in the right attitude. You must get into the proper mood. If you wish the stars to manifest themselves to you, the telescope must not be discarded and the hard mathematical processes must be accepted. If you wish to know matter you must not avoid the test-tube and the chemical analysis. If you want to know physical life, you must not disclaim the microscope and the scalpel. If you want to know rocks, you must take



the hammer." If to these practical appliances you add a genuine enthusiasm for beauty and mystery, which will drive you near to the heart of things, then you will secure a manifestation of nature which no others obtain. The same principle holds good with regard to art. "I do not see all the things in that picture which you mention," said a woman to a great artist. "Don't you wish you could?" was the reply. The sublime symphony may mean little to the chattering, gorgeously attired people in the boxes. It may be a divine ecstasy to the man with the frayed coat who has denied himself a dinner in order to buy a seat far yonder in the remotest corner of the highest gallery.

So Jesus tells us that before we can know Him and realize His presence we must conform to the method by which He can be known. We must observe His commandments. "If a man love Me he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and we will come unto Him and make our abode with Him." Otherwise He will remain as obscure to us as He is to the world. The world, doubtless, has some partial view of Christ. No man can escape seeing Him in some sort of a dull, unreasoning way. He is a palpable force in society. His Churches affect the political balance. They influence customs and laws. They bring the world of commerce to a standstill by holy days and holidays which commemorate Him. He has His finger on the calendar. All civilized nations date their chronology from His advent. He can not be effaced from our civilization, and everybody is aware of His presence in a listless, unthinking fashion. But they do not know Him. They do not realize His fellowship. They do not depend on Him. They do not find joy in Him. They do not experience the thrill of His life. They do not realize Him as a personal force. He is simply a figure for a kind of sentiment which is operative in the world called "Christian opinion."

But Jesus says if we are really to know Him, to be conscious of His presence, more conscious than His disciples were, it must be by keeping His words and loving



Him. That is not an arbitrary regulation; it grows out of the very necessities of our being. We never know any person until we enter into an experience of his will and have taken his point of view. If we live in the atmosphere of the Sermon on the Mount, if we bathe our souls in the spirit of sacrifice, if we are inter-penetrated with the love of Christ, we shall desire to keep His commandments. Many of us must reconstruct our notion of love. It is not a rhapsody of the soul, nor an intellectual admiration. It is determination of the soul. No son really loves his mother who opposes her wishes and outrages her ideals, however extravagantly he expresses his devotion in words. The lines of the familiar hymn convey this thought in reference to Christ:

"O dearly, dearly has He loved:  
And we must love Him too,  
And trust in His redeeming blood,  
And try His works to do."

Bishop William Taylor used to say, "I know Jesus Christ better than I know any other person in the world." Saints in all ages have experienced a like sacred familiarity with the Lord. Such a sublime consciousness of divine fellowship can only be obtained through the power of love, a love certified by faithfully keeping the commandments of Christ.



The mode of Christ's personal manifestation is through the soul's vision, and not through the eye of flesh. This was misunderstood by His first disciples. Jesus was compelled to lead them to an appreciation of His purpose by slow stages. Jude's interrupting question makes it evident that he misconceived the method of Christ's self-revelation until it was more fully explained to him as manifestation in the Spirit. Even then he remained in some confusion.

The object of Christ's manifestation determines the mode of it. God always selects the best way of accom-

plishing His purpose. We ought to understand what the object of His disclosure is, but it sometimes appears doubtful whether people really perceive what God is undertaking to do in any of His self-revelations. Why did He make the world so beautiful and so wonderful? Why did He send Christ to this earth? Why did He have the Bible written? Why did He establish the Christian religion among men? Were all these things to prove His existence? Were they designed to teach men that God is a wise Ruler in His universe? Were they meant to enable the world to recognize Him as good, the very embodiment of love? All these objects are of large importance, but they do not constitute the supreme end of God's self-revelation, which is to make men holy, to draw them to the heart of God, and to fill them with His righteousness.

What is the highest object you can imagine for the love of a father toward his child? Is it not character? You do not feed your boy to make a giant of him. You do not educate him to make an intellectual prodigy of him. You do not clothe him to make a fop of him. You do not fondle him to make a toy of him. You do not discipline him to make a tool of him. You do not give him pleasure to make a prodigal of him. You do not love him to make an idol of him. You nourish him, clothe him, educate him, discipline him, caress him, love him, that some day you may make a good, strong, and useful man of him. Now, that is God's way and God's purpose, and if we saw aright we should observe that the stars burn in the heavens, the seas roll in their beds, the birds sing in the air, the flowers bloom in the fields, the trees wave their branches, the mountains lift their hoary heads, and all nature moves to the rhythm of that great purpose of God—to bring men up to Himself.

Now, if making people holy is the supreme object of God, He has evidently chosen the best method of effecting His purpose in manifesting Himself to the souls of men by spiritual fellowship. He could not accomplish this result by splendid exhibitions of power and majesty. Character will remain untouched by such visions. You

can not make people holy by exhibitions of goodness, though virtue may be applauded in the theater, and tales of heroism may awaken the enthusiasm of even vicious men. You can not make people good by teaching. A man may have a theology which is perfect, and yet be a moral failure himself. Chalmers could preach the gospel many years without the consciousness of a renewed heart. John Wesley could preach to the Indians while saying to his soul, "Who shall convert me?" The only way by which men can be made holy is by the Spirit of holiness, and when He has been received Christ will appear distinctly in the soul's vision.

## IX.

# THE BEGINNING OF BENEDICTION.

## CHAPTER XIV, 25-31.

The character of Christ in His Gospel is thus, according to St. John, the loftiest ideal of purity, peace, self-sacrifice, unbroken communion with God; the inexhaustible fountain of regulated thoughts, high aims, holy action, constant prayer.—*Bishop Alexander.*

THERE must have been a feeling of incompleteness in the hearts of the disciples as they listened to Christ's words concerning the mode of His personal manifestation to them after His departure. The subject was too profound for their immature spiritual intelligence. They would fain have suggested further discourse on this matter, but the Master's manner indicated that He had brought His instructions on this point to a close for the present. Yet He realizes their temper of uncertainty and disquietude, and proceeds to offer promises of relief. "These things have I spoken unto you being yet present with you." But there will be additional enlightenment under the guidance of the *Paraclete*. It must be realized by these disciples that, crowded with constant ministries as the life of their Master has been, it is still incredible that sufficient time and opportunity have been afforded for all that they need to be taught concerning their relations to Him and the Father. In the passage under consideration we observe: 1. The Promise of Instruction; 2. The Bequest of Peace; 3. The Joyful Prospect.

### I. THE PROMISE OF INSTRUCTION. (26.)

Jesus assures the disciples that the Advocate whom the Father will send in answer to His prayer, to abide with them as a Helper in the manifold exigencies of

life, will conduct a course of teaching making further words from Himself unnecessary now. The *Paraclete* is here called the Holy Ghost, an expression which is found in only two other places in this Gospel. (i, 33; xx, 22.) It is used more often in the Synoptics, especially Luke, and is employed with great frequency in the Acts. The very work of the Spirit as described in the words of Jesus preceding this promise verifies the title "Holy." He comes in Christ's name as His representative. (xvi, 13-15.)

The work of the Holy Spirit demanded by the mental and spiritual condition of these disciples is twofold. First, it is that of direct instruction, and second, it is a work of quickening the memory. As Godet says, "These two functions are closely connected. He will teach the new by recalling the old, and will recall the old by teaching the new." In the character of teacher the Holy Spirit will interpret the person and mission of Christ, and in calling the words of Christ to their remembrance He will open their minds to the right understanding of His wonderful teachings, which, according to John's statement (xx, 30), were far more extensive than all that had been recorded. The Fourth Gospel is itself an illustration of the fulfillment of this promise. The narratives of the evangelists as a whole depend for their authenticity upon this work of the Holy Spirit. The apostles often failed to see the meaning of Christ's words at the time He uttered them, but afterward realized their true significance. (John ii, 22; xii, 16; Luke ix, 45; xviii, 34; xxiv, 8.)

The imagination of the Christian who has felt the quickening power of the Spirit in his own mind, as he has pondered the writings of the New Testament, can readily conjecture the joy of these disciples when in future years they experienced the illumination which Christ had promised them.

## II. THE BEQUEST OF PEACE. (27.)

But now the Master must face again the requirements of His disciples for consolation in view of the

separation which is so near, and He pronounces those benedictory syllables which have touched the hearts of millions of our race. He takes up a familiar word of salutation and infuses into it a new and wonderful meaning. (Compare xx, 19, 26.) The peace that is His own He bequeathes to them; first, as persons entrusted with the high office of proclaiming the message of salvation to others, and then as the direct beneficiaries of His love. His peace has spiritual validity. It is not a verbal formality. It exists in His own consciousness and it will be communicated to His disciples through the Holy Spirit. (xvi, 33; xx, 21-23; Eph. ii, 14.) He will bestow this peace in a way different from the giving of the world. The gifts of the world are often made with the expectation of reciprocal favors. They are only material and temporal. They possess no enduring quality, and they fail to satisfy the deepest requirements of the soul. The bequest of Jesus is for time and eternity. It is made to those who can give Him nothing in return but their affectionate loyalty. It will meet the utmost demands of their troubled lives.

On the strength of this bequest Jesus bids His disciples refrain from anxiety and grief. As He had begun his address with consolation and encouragement, He will renew His expressions of comfort now that His mind is full of His prospective departure. As Lange says, "Christ's farewell greeting is a forerunner of the beatific salutation which shall accompany the eternal meeting."

### III. THE JOYOUS PROSPECT. (28-31.)

In place of the sorrow which they experienced at the thought of His removal, Christ tells His disciples they should rejoice. He has already informed them that He is coming to them again. That of itself ought to hearten them. But there is another consideration of weight. If they had busied themselves less with their own bereavement and had thought more of His exaltation to the presence of the Father, they would have entered into His joy in prospect of departure (28). Jesus acknowledges



here, as elsewhere, His sense of subordination to the Father in the execution of the divine law, but this does not imply an essential inferiority on His part. Jesus did not intend to disclaim now that which He had claimed so often before.

Christ has often referred to the effect which the fulfillment of His predictions would have upon His disciples (i, 50; xiii, 19), and now asserts that His reason for telling them about His departure and the work of the Holy Spirit to follow is that by so doing He will confirm their faith when His words have been justified by the facts of their experience. Little opportunity, He tells them, now remains for that delightful intercourse which they have enjoyed. The prince of the sinful world is about to make his final assault upon the sinless One, and having no claim which he can execute, will only secure an empty, meaningless triumph. Nevertheless, Jesus submits to the suffering and shame in order to show His loving obedience to the Father's will. Having uttered these words, He bids His disciples go bravely forth with Him to meet the issue—which He has been anticipating for many months.

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### A Royal Legacy.

*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*—JOHN xiv, 27.

A remarkable will, constructed in proper legal form, and replete with poetic diction, but executed by one whose mind had become unbalanced, has recently been published, from which the following extracts are made:

“I leave to children inclusively, but only for the term of their childhood, all and every, the flowers of the fields, and the blossoms of the woods, with the right to play among them freely, according to the customs of children, warning them at the same time against thistles and thorns. And I devise to children the banks of

the brooks, and the golden sands beneath the waters thereof, and the odors of the willows that dip therein, and the white clouds that float high over the giant trees. And I leave the children the long, long days to be merry in, in a thousand ways, and the night and the moon and the train of the milky way to wonder at. . . .

To our loved ones with snowy crowns I bequeath the happiness of old age, the love and gratitude of their children until they fall asleep."

If one possessed the power thus to bestow upon others the joy which every life craves, as this unfortunate man fancied he did, one might count himself blessed indeed. Daudet, the brilliant French novelist, once said: "I would wish, my task finished, to establish myself as a merchant of happiness. My reward would be in my success." Many less gifted persons have desired to engage in a like enterprise, and though it is of doubtful propriety to make commerce of it, they have sought a most admirable thing. Some of them have undertaken to devise principles in pursuit of which happiness might be discovered. Philosophers have chiefly made this attempt. Plato said, "We should not demand that things be as we wish, but we should wish that things be as they are." Des Cartes expressed it, "I must not seek to gratify my desires so much as I seek to restrain them." Fichte's determination was, "Since I could not alter what was without me, I resolved to try to alter what was within me." Epictetus told his disciples, "If you can not frame your circumstances in accordance with your wishes, frame your will into harmony with your circumstances." Hume regarded the disposition to take a favorable view of the circumstances of life as worth many thousands of pounds to any man. Sir Thomas More declared, "I make it my business to wish as little as I can, except that I were wiser and better." Lucretius, and the Epicureans generally, taught the moderation of desires as the secret of contentment. In recent years we have heard much of the "simple life" from one across the sea who has been regarded the true apostle of its philosophy. All these masters are practically agreed that happiness does not consist in emotional exhilaration, but

in serenity of spirit. All extraordinary, sensuous elevations are inevitably followed by reactions of depression. It is peace which the world seeks.



The elements of human life which disturb the serenity of the mind are many and various. Disappointed ambitions, the vague unrest caused by the uncertainty of our mortal state, the loss of things counted most dear, the consciousness of moral default, the petty grievances of social intercourse, and many other influences tend to overthrow the spirit's equilibrium.

The old fable of the boy who concealed a fox under his tunic until it gnawed into his vitals has its tragic illustrations in the agony of many a soul torn by tormenting doubts. Disease occasions weariness almost too heavy to be borne. Wealth purchases a load of responsibility and disquietude which its possessors seek in vain to discard. Poverty, no less than riches, imposes its intolerable weight of anxiety. Remorse for sins hidden from public view fills the soul with deepest misery. Peace in the midst of care and perplexity seems impossible to the mind seeking help in the circumstances of life alone. A spirit of ceaseless activity takes possession of the troubled mind. Flight from the present habitat to some untraveled territory is conceived as the means of mitigating weariness.

Carlyle's words are striking: "Mount into your railways; whirl from place to place at the rate of fifty, or, if you like, five hundred miles an hour; you can not escape from that inexorable, all-circling ocean-moan of *ennui*. No; if you would mount to the stars, and do yacht-voyages under the belts of Jupiter, or stalk deer on the rings of Saturn, it would still begirdle you. You can not escape from it; you can but change your place in it, without solacement except one moment's."

So irritating are the vexations of life that many a soul experiences the melancholy passion of Kingsley, who often looked upon the quiet churchyard near his

home and expressed a longing for the time when he should lie sleeping in its calm embrace. Such troubled ones sympathize with the sentiment of an epitaph in a German church-yard: "I will arise, O Christ, when Thou callest me, but O, let me rest awhile for I am very weary."

Now comes Jesus to proclaim Himself, not a "merchant of happiness," but the benefactor of all members of our race who will accept His bounty. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." What a bequest this is! The phraseology is probably suggested by the common Oriental salutation, but the spirit and meaning are distinctly Christ's alone. It is spoken, as Luther says, like the farewell of "one who is about to go away and says good-night or gives his blessing." It made a profound impression on some of the earlier Christians, many of whom gave names to their children embodying its significance, such as "Irene" and "Irenæus." In the catacombs of Rome the inscription *in pace* is frequently found upon the tombs of Christians. Jesus is the Prince of Peace and has it in His power to impart His treasure to others. His words convey, first, the sense of trusteeship imposed upon His disciples, "My peace I leave with you," and then emphasize the sense of personal possession, "My peace I give unto you."

It is the peace which He experienced in Himself. Nothing is more remarkable than the composure which Jesus invariably exhibited. He was poor—so poor that He had not where to lay His head. He was opposed by persons highest in authority, and found Himself the victim of malevolent misconstructions of His motives. He was misunderstood by those who, by reason of their nearness to Him, ought to have apprehended His mission most readily. He was subjected to the possibility of sudden calamity. The prospect of final assassination was constantly before His mind. His reputation was blasted by malicious falsehoods. His life was one prolonged struggle with hard conditions; yet He was serene to the end. He was unshaken by trepidation in the little

boat tossed by the sudden storm of the Galilean sea, and He showed no perturbation in the presence of the maniac with the legion of devils. No outbreak of the nether world disconcerted Him for a moment. Pilate was amazed at the calmness of His demeanor. Goethe has described progress as going on without haste and without rest. This definition would properly characterize the career of Jesus. However wild might be the currents of His life, He moved calmly on the surface of the stream, manifesting no solicitude for His personal welfare.



The will of Patrick Henry concluded with the following words: "I have now disposed of all my property to my family. There is one more thing I wish I could give them, and that is the Christian religion." The transfer of one's faith to another is regarded as impossible, but Jesus declares that His peace is communicable; yet the process of bequest differs from that employed in the world's transactions, as becomes a spiritual experience. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The salutations of peace on the lips of men are sometimes insincere, and at best have the emptiness of conventionality. Jesus is the incarnation of truth. The world may be able to bestow a degree of outer satisfaction by courtesy and considerateness and by ministering to temporal and material desires, but Jesus confers an inner spiritual peace which can not be injured by the annoyances and irritations of life. The world can give temporary satisfactions. When these are exhausted, as will quickly be the case, the heart feels its hunger with increased intensity. Jesus bequeaths eternal peace which no sorrow in this life can remove, and which will reach its highest development in the life which is to come.

When Faraday, who was said to have the intellect of twenty men, was asked, on his dying bed, "What are your speculations?" he responded: "Speculations? I have none. I am resting on certainties. 'I know whom

I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.'” The peace which the great scientist experienced was transmitted to him from the Sovereign of his soul. The identical treasure is available to all who will accept it. “Of His fullness have all we received and grace for grace.”

We shall discern how Jesus imparts peace to others if we ascertain the source of His own peace. It requires but little reflection to discover that His peace was an effect of His perfect unity with His Father. He affirms that it is meat and drink to do the will of God. His disciples will obtain peace when they also sustain right relations toward God. Peace comes through obedience.

Lord Nelson was accustomed to give this advice to his subordinates, “Obey all orders of your superior officers with an alacrity which will not give you time to inquire into their propriety.” The prompt acceptance of Christ’s commandments and the discharge of every duty which He imposes upon us will insure quietness of mind and a calm spirit. The office of Jesus in reconciling us to God, and bringing us into obedience to His will is one of the evidences of the necessity of His atoning grace. He reconciles us to the Father’s love and draws us away from sin which would separate us from God, and by spiritual fellowship with us makes us sharers in the peace of His own life. It is thus that we may “practice the presence of Christ,” and can realize that “all things work together for good to them that love the Lord.”



Lecky has said, in evident censure of the age, “that after eighteen hundred years’ profession of the creed of peace, Christendom is an armed camp.” This international inconsistency is reproduced in the conduct of individual Christians. They declare their belief in the “peace which passeth all understanding,” but they do not avail themselves of the benefits which Christ stands ready to confer upon them. There is no escape from the



troubles to which our human life is incident, but it is not necessary that affliction shall overthrow the stability of the soul. Jesus underwent a more severe ordeal than any other human being will ever be required to suffer. He maintained Himself without murmur or complaint against the providential order in which He found Himself, and when He left the world He offered to those who love Him the blessing of victorious peace. Thousands of devout Christians have confirmed in their own lives the reality of His legacy, and all who trust His grace and live His life may as readily enter into His rest.

Cowper has drawn with skillful hand a contrast between a life of faith and one of unbelief in the portrait of the humble Christian which he set over against the picture of Voltaire. The first is that of a peasant woman engaged in poorly requited labor, who,

“Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,  
Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night  
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light;  
She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,  
Has little understanding, and no wit,  
Receives no praise; but, though her lot be such,  
(Toilsome and indigent), she renders much;  
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—  
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;  
And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes  
Her title to a treasure in the skies.  
O happy peasant! O unhappy bard!  
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward;  
He praised perhaps for ages yet to come,  
She never heard of half a mile from home;  
He lost in errors his vain heart prefers,  
She safe in the simplicity of hers!”

## X.

# CHRIST AND THE DISCIPLES—AN ALLEGORY.

## CHAPTER XV, I-II.

It is John more than any other teacher who has imparted the secret of that living fellowship with Christ which is the central message of Christianity.—*Scott.*

THE words, "Arise, let us go hence" (xiv, 31), constitute the line of demarcation between the first and second groups into which the farewell discourses of Jesus naturally fall. On their surface these words seem to indicate that now the assembly began to dissolve, the disciples rising with their Lord from the table, and preparing to go forth with Him into the streets which led to Gethsemane. Here we should probably insert the hymn which two of the Synoptists mention (Matt. xxvi, 30; Mark xiv, 26), and which was presumably the second portion of the Hallel, comprising Psalms cxv—cxviii. It is held by some scholars that when the singing was ended the company proceeded on their way across the Kidron, and that during their passage to the place where Jesus entered into His agony the Master pronounced the sentences which follow, including the intercessory prayer in chapter xvii. On the other hand, many believe that, as they were about to leave the room where the supper had been eaten, Jesus paused to supplement what He had been saying, arrested by the desire to administer further consolation and counsel before issuing into the night, and that, having resumed discourse, He continued until He had offered prayer, and then led His disciples out to the final conflict. Others fancy that when Jesus and His disciples had reached the open court

of the house in which they had been assembled, the Master checked His companions, and under the starlighted sky, in a place which offered a measure of seclusion, spoke to them His closing message and offered His high-priestly prayer, lifting up His eyes to heaven. (xvii, 1.) The public street, even at night, scarcely seems appropriate for the delivery of these sacred teachings, and Westcott, who calls this second group of utterances "discourse on the way," has suggested that they were spoken in the courts of the temple, which it is said were available at midnight, and has emphasized the solemn appropriateness of the place and circumstances. This view is not supported by some eminent men of learning, and the question is not capable of determination. True to His purpose of keeping Christ's final communications together as constituting one great message, from the moment when Jesus exclaims, "Now is the Son of man glorified" (xiii, 31), until the last syllable of the intercessory prayer has been uttered, John does not give any note of place or circumstances, the introduction of which at this point would have impaired the impression of unity which he desires to preserve. Jesus has undertaken to relieve the despondency of His disciples by many gracious promises and words of instruction. He now proceeds to show them that a vital union between Himself and His followers can be maintained forever, which will not only provide a source of unflinching comfort, but which will also secure to them the power to meet every demand made upon them as His representatives. This teaching He imparts to them under a figure which they can readily understand, and which clearly illustrates their responsibilities. The allegory of the vine and the branches, as employed by Jesus, involves: 1. The figure in its general relations; 2. Its special applications; 3. The results of the union which it illustrates.

#### I. THE SYMBOL GENERALIZED. (1, 2.)

The imagery of this allegory might have been suggested by a variety of circumstances. A vine climbing

the walls of the house in which Jesus and His disciples were assembled; "the fruit of the vine" (Matt. xxvi, 29) employed in the supper, during which the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist was instituted; the prevalence of vineyards in the region, and the familiarity of the disciples with the culture of the vine and the value of its product, would offer suitable reasons for adopting this metaphor. If the words were spoken in the court of the temple, as some suppose, the great golden vine on the gate would be a sufficient hint to a quick intelligence, "though that is wanting in the *life* which is the very point of comparison," as Canon Bernard declares. If Christ's final words were uttered as He and His disciples made their way to the Mount of Olives, the vineyards on the hillsides, and the fires in which the prunings of the springtime were being consumed, would serve to introduce the figure. But apart from these material suggestions was the fact that the vine had been frequently associated in the Scriptures with the history of Israel. (Psa. lxxx, 8-19; Isa. v, 1-7; Jer. ii, 21; Hos. x, 1.) It was a national emblem, and under the Maccabees had been stamped on the coins of the realm. Moreover, this appropriate symbolism would occur to Christ's mind without the assistance of any object of sense on account of its harmony with the teaching of the occasion and the significance of the sacred institution then inaugurated. The fact of His approaching separation from His disciples made it important that their minds should realize how their need would be supplied by a spiritual union with Him which no conditions of time or place could sever.

When Jesus thought of the utter dependence of His disciples upon Himself, and their insufficiency for any spiritual achievement apart from the life which He transmitted to them, He saw that in their vital and indissoluble union with Him all that was signified by the ancient type of Israel as a vine of Jehovah's planting was having its actual fulfillment. The vine had sometimes been acknowledged as the symbol of Messiah, but the vine and the branches taken together are necessary

to fill out the conception of Jesus. Israel had failed to realize the divine ideal, but He and those related to Him by an inseparable unity would attain that glory. Hence He calls Himself "the True Vine," the veritable, genuine, ideal, perfect Vine, in contrast with the defective and unsatisfactory vine of Israel. As He is the Light of the World, the Bread of Life, the Good Shepherd, and the Door of Salvation, so He is the real Vine, but in such a way as to include His disciples, who draw their sustenance from Him, and in turn produce fruitage which glorifies God the Father, who is here called the Husbandman. He is the owner of the field in which the Vine is growing, and with His own hands He attends as Vinedresser to its needs, having constantly in mind the requirements of both the Vine and the branches. Christ thus emphasizes His union with believers through His real humanity, in which relation He occupies the same position before the Father as do the disciples themselves. (Heb. ii, 11; v, 8.) His Father has planted Him as the Vine. From Him they spring forth as branches. In this way He will express Himself to the world, the fruit which they bear being evidence of their identification with Him.

The organic union between the Vine and the branches is maintained unimpaired in two ways; first, by cutting off sterile branches, and second, by purging branches which are in danger of running to woody growths (2). "In the old dispensation, union with Israel was the condition of life; in the new, union with Christ."—*Westcott*. Even the branches which produce nothing but leaves are genuine branches, if they are united however slightly to Christ. But if they fail to perform their functions, they are doomed to separation from the Vine. No account is here made of the branches of other trees. Thought is centered only on those who, having once been identified with Christ, but having steadily refrained from proving by fruitful lives any fellowship with Him, have finally lost all connection with the Vine. If nothing else reveals their separation from Christ, death will accomplish it. The branches which bear fruit are no less an occasion

of concern to the Husbandman. They are flourishing, but they can produce more fruitage if they have less leafage. Hence the pruning-knife is brought into requisition.

## II. THE SYMBOL SPECIALIZED. (3-7.)

The theme presented in the preceding verses is now amplified and applied specifically to our Lord's disciples. That they are branches has been intimated, but not definitely declared. Now it is asserted that they are pruned, cleansed, purged branches of the true Vine (3). They have been subjected to the discipline of the Vinedresser. They were purified because of the revelation which they had received from Christ, "the word" He had spoken being both the source and the instrument of their cleansing. Others after them would undergo the same purging, but the fact of immediate importance is that they have been purified and made ready to perform the obligation which rests upon them as branches.

Since right relations have been established between Christ and His disciples, it is now incumbent upon them to preserve their unity with Him. This is the essential condition of life and productiveness, as productiveness is the only sufficient justification for the existence of the vine and the attention which it receives. The permanence of the cleansed condition depends upon the continuance of the union with the Vine. In no other way can the branches bear fruit (4). Responsibility for maintaining this relation appears to be placed on believers themselves. Here the parallelism of the allegory can not be regarded as exact. Branches have no power of choice, but disciples possess this freedom. They can choose to abide or not to abide. Divinely appointed methods of preserving union with Christ are available to them. The idea of abiding carries with it not only the thought of continuousness, but also of exclusiveness. No other source of life can be discovered, either in the believer's own self or in any other agent. It is impossible to stand alone or to find root and sustenance in one's self. "Without Me ye can do nothing." The impartation of Christ's



life is conditioned on the believer's seeking it. If he craves attachment to his Lord, Christ will respond by drawing him to Himself, and it is by this mutual attachment alone that the disciple can be productive (5).

If this organic union is not maintained, the consequence is separation of the believer from Christ. This catastrophe is not deferred to a remote future; it occurs immediately, being effected at the moment when vital relations between the disciple and his Lord are terminated. The final result is destruction (6). The figure here employed may have been suggested by the common sight of heaps of twigs being consumed in the fires which were kindled for the purpose in Spring. There is evidently a free use of the symbolism, without precise application; for the destruction of branches and the destruction of unfruitful believers is not the same literally. In one case there is extinction; in the other, ruin. But in each case the result is virtually identical, for both perish or come to nothing.

### III. THE SYMBOL REALIZED. (7-11.)

If this ideal organic union is maintained between Christ and His disciples, blessed results ensue. The first of these is the certainty of receiving answers to prayer (7). The harmonious relations between the disciples and their Lord in thought and purpose, expressed in the form, "if ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you," make it impossible that they should ask Him for that which is contrary to His will. In consequence of answered prayer the disciples will naturally and inevitably be producers of fruit, and so will glorify the Father who is the Husbandman (8). The fruit thus borne will consist of a Christly character and life, through which the Lord will manifest Himself to the world. It is in this way that they will demonstrate the truthfulness of their claim to be the disciples of Christ. As they grow in strength and productiveness they will become more and more the disciples of their Lord. Life is progressive, and the imparted life of Christ in the believer's heart will develop in him an increasingly rich fruitage.

The love which subsists between Christ and the Father is now taken as the type of the love which must be shared between Christ and His disciples (9). The relation of the Father to the Son is like that of the Christ to His disciples. (vi, 57; x, 14, 15.) The love which is Christ's own is the love in which they are to abide. The condition of abiding in this love is the keeping of Christ's commandments, even as He has kept the Father's commandments (10). Obedience both proves and evokes love. The allegory of the vine and the branches concludes with Christ's announcement of His purpose in giving this teaching, which is twofold: "that My joy might remain in you"—the joy that was His own—"and that your joy might be full"—their own human joy. His joy sprang from His sense of fellowship with His Father, and their joy would have its source in the same consciousness of divine communion. Human happiness can attain no loftier height than to share with Christ the joy of fulfilling the will of the Father.

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### The Secret of an Effective Life.

*"I am the vine, ye are the branches."*—JOHN xv, 5.

In certain sub-tropical sections of our country one sees great rose-bushes climbing the sides of humble dwellings, fairly rioting in color, and so full of flowers that the stalk and leafage are scarcely visible. The Oriental brain is similarly productive of similes, metaphors, parables, allegories, and pictures, which convey great truths in attractive forms; and the mind of Jesus grew these in tropical luxuriousness. His speech was forever blossoming forth in glowing imagery expressing sublime conceptions in figures and illustrations which once heard could never be forgotten. Among these none is more effective than His allegory of the vine and the branches, which must have brought deep consolation to the hearts of His disciples in the sorrow of their prospective be-

reavement, and which doubtless clung to their memories during the balance of their lives as a perpetual reminder of the spiritual fellowship with Him, which Jesus had told them would continue forever.

Under the imagery which Jesus used, His disciples were taught that the normal relation between themselves and their Master was one of organic union. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." The conception thus conveyed is quite different from that which is frequently held by modern Christians, who think of Jesus as their Leader and of themselves as followers; He is the Pattern, they are His imitators; He is the Captain, they are His soldiers; He is the King, they are His subjects. Each of these figures is true enough in single aspects of our relation to Christ, but all of them together are inadequate to express the complete truth or to reveal the foundation of real discipleship. True believers are not simply a mass of individuals congregated together as distinct units, resembling one another by the possession of the Christian name, a common faith, identical aims, or any other mark of resemblance. True believers are vitally joined to Christ, derive their life from Him, receive their impulses from His will, and pursue the work which He gives them to do. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." This is the divine idea of Christian discipleship.

"I am the true Vine and My Father is the Husbandman." It was a familiar idea with the men to whom Jesus spoke these words that the people of Israel were the vine which God had planted. Historically they had signally failed in fulfilling the requirements of this symbolism. The Prophet Isaiah very pointedly rebukes this dereliction: "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? . . . For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant; and He looked for judgment, and behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry." As Israel was a defective fulfillment of the type embodied in

the vine, so the natural vine at best was an imperfect realization of the deep spiritual truth it was intended to convey. Hence Jesus says in effect: "No matter how much the figure of the vine may lack in the possibility of precise application, I am the ideal Vine, I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman who cares for Me and for the branches, My true disciples, through whom I am to express Myself to the world."

The relationship indicated in this symbol is in perfect harmony with the known principles of nature. The late Lord Kelvin said, "I am ready to accept as an article of faith in science, valid for all time and in all space, that life is produced by life, and only by life." Tyndall was accustomed to express himself with equal positiveness concerning the impossibility of spontaneous generation. Pasteur made many conclusive experiments in the glacial heights of the Alps, as well as in the dark recesses of the earth, to prove the proposition that no life can be produced without antecedent life. Scientists have been quite unanimously agreed touching this matter. The spiritual application of the fact so accepted is obvious, and so is the significance of another dictum of science which is universally acknowledged. If life can not be produced without antecedent life, neither can it be maintained without relating itself to an environment which is friendly to life. If the branch is dependent upon the vine for its sustenance, no perpetuation of its life can be expected when it has been severed therefrom. It can not set itself up independently; it must bear vital relation to the stalk. The same is true concerning the spiritual life of human beings. It can not be generated without contact with the Source of life, and it can not be sustained, when generated, without constant attachment to the agency by which life is maintained. Attempts from without are unavailing. We can not impart Christian principles to the souls of men by the method employed to transfuse blood into depleted veins. Spiritual life must spring from within by the creative impulse of Him who is life.

Nevertheless, the responsibility for maintaining or-

ganic union with Christ is upon the believer himself. "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch can not bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me." In another place Jesus says, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit." Here the divine initiative appears to be emphasized. But we must remember that Jesus does not choose those who do not choose Him. The allegory can not be precisely worked out at this point with perfect correspondence of terms, because branches of the natural vine can not be held responsible for their attachment to the stalk, having no intelligence or freedom of choice. But with men the case is different. The impartation of Christ's life is conditioned upon the will of the believer to possess it. If he desires and endeavors to secure attachment to Christ, his purpose will be met by the favor of his Lord. If this responsibility is neglected, then separation from the vine ensues; "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away." "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered." The mystery of this separation from Christ of one who has been attached to Him is beyond our power to solve, but it is a fact of human life of most tragic quality, illustrations of which abound in every community. If this responsibility is accepted, then the Vine-dresser devotes Himself with particular care to the disciple who gives promise of large productiveness. "Every branch in Me that beareth fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." By the use of the pruning-knife He retards the development of excessive growths and confines the life of the vine to its legitimate function—the bearing of fruit. Jesus tells His disciples that they have been pruned and qualified to glorify God by the products of their lives.



The only justification for the existence of the vine is fruitfulness. For this end it was planted. Its leaves are beautiful, its spiral tendrils are graceful, the shade



it casts is refreshing—a growing vineyard is a pleasing sight. But these are only incidental values. No horticulturist would plant a vineyard merely for beauty. Fruit is his expectation and the reward of his industry. So the purpose of a Christian life is not a placid, beautiful character, not graces of refinement, nor personal agreeableness, though all of these are legitimate evidences of Christianity—but fruitfulness—the exhibition of a Christly character and Christly conduct.

Now, it is the organic union of the vine and the branches which makes productiveness possible. So Jesus affirms in His allegory. But His declaration concerns both the vine and the branches. Just as the branch can accomplish nothing without the vine, so the vine can accomplish nothing without the branches. Without fruit the vine is no better than a crooked rod. The thought that Christ can not bear fruit in the vineyard of the world without believers in whom He can express Himself is most impressive, and its truth can not be denied. Christ is dependent upon true believers for the means of personal manifestation. He is no longer visible to the world in His own person, but in the persons of others. He does not preach through His own lips, or feed the starving with His own hand, or win the sinner with His own words. He accomplishes these results through His disciples. He multiplies Himself indefinitely in this way, and so fulfills the promise He made to those disciples: "Greater works than these shall ye do because I go to My Father." The whole mission of the Church is entrusted to fruit-bearing Christians.

Life has been compared by a great scientist to the general of an army who is not usually seen in the thickest of the fight, but who, nevertheless, is constantly active in directing the forces under his command. He may do his work sitting in a well-guarded room, from which telegraphic wires issue to every part of the battlefield. It is his mind which controls every division of his army, and his will which determines each maneuver and evolution. It is thus that Christ may be said to work His will through the multitudes of souls who confess faith



in Him, and what is achieved by His disciples in every part of the world is but the effect of His grace operating through human personalities. All this is accomplished by maintaining the organic union of Christ and believers. "Without Me ye can do nothing." No dependence can be placed upon any other source of intelligence or energy. We hear much about the value of helpful environment, and there is doubtless importance in this element of life. But he who has the indestructible principle of life in himself will rise superior to any surroundings. History is full of illustrations of men who have defied their environment, and have mastered every ill condition in which they found themselves. Jesus would have His disciples understand that if they live in Him they will derive from Him sufficient spiritual energy to conquer every adverse circumstance.

Gladstone, writing one day to his wife, referred to a line in the "Paradise" of Dante, which can be translated, "In His will is our peace," and in commenting on these words, which he says are few and simple, and yet "appear to me to have an incomprehensible majesty of truth about them," he says: "The final state which we are to contemplate with hope, and to seek by discipline, is that in which our will shall be one with the will of God, not simply shall submit to it, not simply shall follow after it, but shall live and move with it, even as the pulse of the blood in the extremities acts with the central movement of the heart."



Jesus specifies certain great consequences which follow the preservation of this organic union between Himself and His disciples. Among these He names answered prayer. "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Here lies open before the Christian a field of immeasurable opportunity. Let him enter into the mind of Christ, let him share the will of his Lord, let him be pervaded by the Spirit of his Master, let him secure

the outlook of the Savior's eye, and he will ask for those things which it is the pleasure of God invariably to grant, and so will be executing the high purpose of the Everlasting Father.

As an inevitable consequence of answered prayer his personal power of productiveness will be intensified. "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." The weakness for which Christians feel bound to apologize has no ground in reason. Christ insists that life which derives its inspiration from Him is sure to be victorious, and the conclusion is that lives which are lacking in the triumphant tone are deficient in fellowship with Him. "So shall ye be My disciples," is the completed form in which Jesus expresses the outcome of this organic union with Himself. Genuine discipleship is only apparent where Christian productiveness is exhibited in rich fruitage.

Epictetus regarded a genuine disciple of the Cynic school of philosophy as one of the noblest of beings. He said to a young student, "If you think that you can be a Cynic by merely wearing an old cloak, and sleeping on a hard bed, using a wallet and staff, and rebuking every one whom you see effeminately dressed, or wearing purple, you don't know what you are about. Get you gone!" Then he follows with a description of a true Cynic, couched in terms so refined and charming that one can not help wishing certain ineffective Christians would embody its elements in their own unfruitful lives. So we can imagine Jesus saying to some prospective disciple who is timidly balancing the expediency of following Him: "If you think you can be a Christian by merely receiving baptism, reciting a confession, absorbing a catechism, attending public worship, paying for the support of a Church, and maintaining a decent moral character, you do not suspect what a Christian actually is. Go your way!" Something of this sort was doubtless in His thought when He said to the rich youth, "Go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow Me." Words of the same

character He may be presumed to utter to the souls of other men, who, though they have no fortunes to interfere with the development of their spiritual characters, suffer the deteriorating influences of other alluring things, and fail to realize that no intellectual assent to the teachings of Christ, and no vows of devotion to His cause, can be substituted for the genuine products of an inner fellowship with the mind and spirit of Jesus Christ.

## XI.

### CHRIST'S DISCIPLES AND THE WORLD.

#### CHAPTER XV, 12-25.

According to the Johannine discourses, Jesus regarded the members of the narrower circle of disciples, who had been His regular attendants, and had surrounded Him at the Last Supper, as the specially called organs for the further extension of the Church.—*Wendt*.

THE opposing forces of love and hate are in this passage brought into sharp contrast. They are the strongest passions of the soul when they have been fully aroused. In the Scripture before us we have pregnant illustrations of the purest love and of the most unreasonable hatred humanity has ever experienced. The love of Christ for His disciples is reproduced in the love of the disciples for one another. The hatred of the world for Christ is perpetuated in the hatred of the world for His disciples. That hate spent itself temporarily in the murder of Jesus. It asserted itself with renewed venom against His followers, many of whom were subjected to the same scorn and violence with which He was assaulted. Foreseeing the ordeals which His disciples must undergo, Jesus lays great emphasis upon the love which must bind them together, and the possession of which will qualify them to perform the mission for which they have been ordained, and enable them to endure bravely the ills which the world's hatred will entail upon them. The passage under consideration treats of: 1. The union of Christ's disciples through love; 2. The hatred of the world toward Christ and His disciples.

## I. THE LOVE OF CHRIST'S DISCIPLES. (12-17.)

Jesus has just been speaking of the joy which He purposes His disciples shall experience, and now announces the commandment in the keeping of which they will attain this felicity (12). He had previously given it as distinctively His own (xiii, 34), and had designated its measure and content: "As I have loved you." John elsewhere declares that the love of the brethren is necessary to prove sincere love toward God. (1 John iv, 20.) Such love expresses the true relation of the branches to one another and to the vine.

The supreme illustration of the love which is essential to the fulfillment of the commandment is that which inspires a man to lay down his life for others (13), which is precisely what Jesus is about to do. He had already intimated this as His purpose (x, 11, 17, 18), and very soon He would accomplish it, though this is the only reference to it in this discourse—an instance of remarkable self-suppression. His last moments are dedicated to the consolation and instruction of His disciples. His love is their model. John could never forget these words of Jesus. (1 John iii, 16.) It is also true that Christ will lay down His life for those who are not His friends (Rom. v, 7-10), but even foes are considered in the guise of friendship when one is willing to die for them. His own disciples can only be regarded as Christ's friends in so far as they keep His commandments (14). (Compare chapter xiv, 21, 23; James ii, 23.)

Those who have been true to Him have from the very beginning been esteemed as friends, but now He confers that title upon them with marked significance. No longer will He designate them servants, as He had frequently done before. (Compare xii, 26; xiii, 13-16; Matt. x, 24; also many of His parables.) They are now emerging from a service, which they had accepted as a just requirement on the part of their Master, to a service which embodies a cordial and intelligent participation in the mission of their Lord. They would still

rejoice to call themselves bondservants of Jesus Christ (Rom. i, 1; James i, 1; 2 Peter i, 1; Rev. i, 1), but they would do so under the sense of a sympathetic co-operation with Him. The proof of their confidential relation with Christ is expressed in the words, "All things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you" (15). In this fact lies the distinction between their position and that of mere servants: "For the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth."

The disciples are reminded that their happy condition is the gift of Christ, and not the result of their own choice (16). That they have been ordained to the highest service in which men can engage by the grace of their Lord is evidence of the love which He bears them. If they fulfill their ministry with fidelity, the fruit of it will remain, and they will have the power to secure immeasurable blessings (16).

The sentence, "These things I command you, that ye love one another," expressing His will and the purpose with which He uttered it, serves both as conclusion to what He has been saying, and as an introduction to that which follows. For similar usage compare xiv, 25; xv, 2; xvi, 1, 25, 33.

## II. THE HATRED OF THE WORLD. (18-25.)

The enmity of the world toward Christ's disciples, which is in sharp contrast with the love which they are expected to exhibit toward one another, is taken for granted. Jesus does not predict it, but assumes that they will expect it. He explains the reasons for it, and on the strength of these He offers them strong consolation. "If the world hate ye, know ye that the world hated Me before it hated you" (18). "The world" is human society pervaded by a spirit of selfishness, and deriving its inspirations and aspirations from earthly considerations. This hatred is turned against the characteristic spirit of Christians. It will be a comfort to these disciples to remember that the hatred of the world toward them is identical with its hostility toward their Master.



It is because they have His Spirit and aims that they are the victims of worldly antagonism.

Another consolation is found in the knowledge that the hatred of the world will show these disciples to be "not of the world." If they were of the world, the world would love its own (19). On the contrary, they have entered into a new world, having received life from the Spirit. (i, 12, 13; iii, 5.) The persecution which they will be compelled to suffer is the inevitable result of their fellowship with Christ and their alienation from the world. It is this which knits them together as disciples and gives them evidence of their own genuineness. (1 John iii, 13, 14.) Jesus had said to His questioning brethren, "The world can not hate you, but Me it hateth." (Chapter vii, 7.) In them it found some degree of comradeship, but in Him there was no point of affiliation. (Compare i, 10.) In so far as Christ's disciples were out of harmony with the unbelieving world, they would be objects of the world's hatred.

But this would be a mark of honor upon them. The more they resembled their Master, the more they would receive like treatment from the world; "Remember the word that I said unto you: The servant is not greater than his Lord" (20). Reception or rejection of their teaching would be determined by the very considerations which had moved men to welcome or repudiate Christ's sayings. It must be apparent to them that they are to suffer for their Lord's sake, and this reflection should inspire them with patience, remembering that the cause of the world's hatred is the world's ignorance of Him who sent their Lord to offer eternal life to men (21).

The guilt of the world's hatred of Christ, and hence of its enmity to His followers, is determined by its defiance of the revelations clearly made to it (22-25). Two facts stand out boldly in condemnation of the world: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not sin. . . . If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin." But Christ has come as Messiah. They had heard Him speak, and were moved to admiration by His words. (vii, 46.)

They had witnessed His deeds, and were compelled to acknowledge their supreme merit. (ix, 32, 33; xi, 47.) They understood His claims, they were aware of His purpose; hence their guilt was inexcusable. "Now they have no cloak for their sin. . . . Now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father. He that hateth Me hateth My Father also." Having no occasion for this hatred (25), they are doubly culpable, and their gratuitous animosity is the fulfillment of their own Scriptures as a whole and specifically. (Compare Psa. lxxix, 4; xxxv, 19.)

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### Servitude and Friendship.

*"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you."*—JOHN xv, 15.

The seeming contradictions of Scripture often give us the deepest insight into truth. There are many passages in the New Testament in which Christians are designated as "bond-servants," which is the more exact meaning of the term here employed. Jesus virtually said to His disciples only a little before this moment, "The slave is not greater than his lord." The apostles did not hesitate to describe themselves by this term, Paul proudly calling himself "the bond-servant of Jesus Christ." Peter, James, John, and Jude claimed the same title. The servant of God is a familiar description of the Messiah. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many," proclaims Isaiah in a passage held to be Messianic from time immemorial. "Who being in the form of God, . . . made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant," says Paul. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many," is His own assertion. "I am among you as He that

serveth," He said at another time. And these declarations of His office were supported by a constant subordination to the needs of men in His glorious life of self-sacrifice. This example of service Jesus sets before His disciples as the norm of Christian conduct. "Ye should do as I have done." Infidelity often flings the taunt of this servitude upon modern Christians, commiserating them for the galling limitations which it is assumed to entail upon them; but they joyfully affirm their willingness to accept the honor of imitating their Master.

Two kinds of servitude are to be distinguished: that which is voluntary, and that which is involuntary. The ignoble part of servanthood is the compulsory element which it often contains. If servitude is voluntary, it is not degrading, but dignified. "Ich Dien"—I serve—is the motto of the Prince of Wales. All right-minded persons glorify service; "Servant of God, well done" introduces one of our most noble hymns. It is said of David that he "served his own generation by the will of God."

"Work for some good, be it ever so slowly;  
Cherish some flower, be it ever so lowly;  
Labor! All labor is noble and holy."

Even involuntary servitude may contain mitigating or ameliorating circumstances making it more or less tolerable to a man who has no high conception of the worth and dignity of independence. At one time it was a fad in the imperial circles of Rome to teach philosophy to slaves, who, by reason of their increased intelligence, became more agreeable companions of their masters. Under such circumstances their own lives were in a sense made more endurable. During the existence of slavery in our own country, bondmen who were closely drawn to their masters by ties of real affection, and were thus the objects of special care and attention, must have found their lot somewhat relieved. Yet involuntary servitude is destructive of the highest sense of manhood, and its removal is regarded as one of the most desirable achievements of society.

On the other hand, voluntary service may be rendered under conditions making it almost intolerable. Service based on physical necessity often amounts to involuntary servitude. The depressed classes, who are driven to toil to secure a bare subsistence, though weak and sickly and incompetent for labor; children under age, who are compelled to toil at tasks too heavy for them; men who are practically owned by selfish masters who trade on their poverty, experiencing a terrible thrall-dom, compose what we are accustomed to characterize as the white slaves of the twentieth century.

At the same time, there is a kind of voluntary service, based on moral or social obligations, which amounts to involuntary servitude, and this is not degrading, but ennobling. The patriot who willingly devotes his treasure and his life to the deliverance of his country from oppression; the mother who does not hesitate to exhaust all her energies in a passionate devotion to the interests of her child; the social worker who lavishes the best possessions of life upon the effort to redeem the slums, is each engaged in a voluntary servitude, but under an obligation so imperative that their service becomes compulsory. Such persons we do not pity, but applaud. This is the service of the Christian, which, being on the face of it a voluntary service, is in effect an involuntary service. Jesus Himself was an example of this kind of devotion. He said, concerning the sacrifice of His life, "No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself; I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again." He said, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, and finish His work." Paul's conception of his mission was of like character: "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel." Now, moral obligation to Christ is so vast that the Christian feels himself under compulsion to yield service to Him. However, he experiences no sense of enslavement, for it is a sublime thing to be driven by a great purpose. The ordinary ship which conveys passengers and freight from one port to another engages in a commendable enterprise for the benefit of modern civilization; but Peary's

ship, sailing to the unfriendly regions of the North in the interest of a scientific knowledge which will benefit the human mind, is devoted to a higher object; and a ship carrying provisions to starving Russia or famine-stricken India must be conceived as dedicated to a still nobler end. A parallel may be carried forward with relation to human beings. A man of intelligence is always interesting and always significant, but the aspirations of his life will determine the estimate we must place upon his services. The merchant is the servant of social requirements, and discharges his obligations with the expectation of reward; a soldier engages in strife under the protection of his government and with the anticipation of certain emoluments; but a savior of society, who surrenders his life to the interests of oppressed and degraded people, hoping for no compensation save the consciousness of duty well done, attains a higher dignity than persons engaged in any occupation which involves considerations of self-interest. The servant of God is inspired by the motive of beneficence, and he is driven by the compulsion of love. In this there is no thralldom but that of a divine passion.



But now Jesus introduces a new term, in contradistinction to that of bond-servant. "I do not call you servants any longer, because your servanthood has moved up into a higher realm; I have set you down in My list of personal friends." True friends, one observes, will always be servants; but it is not certain that servants will always be friends. They may serve from necessity, or for remuneration, or for some other motive arising out of self-interest; but friends will serve because of love. Addison says, "Friendship is a strong and habitual inclination in two persons to promote the good and happiness of each other." Jesus says, "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."

We can appreciate the advantages of this method of enlisting the service of His disciples, if we place it over



against another. Suppose Jesus had appealed, not to love, but to fear; not to friendship, but to self-interest. He might have said, "I am your Lord and Master; I can punish you for disobedience, and I will reward you for obedience. Though I seem to be leaving the world, I shall continue to exercise My sovereignty in the world; My eye will be constantly upon you." He might have said, as did the Saracen general to his Arab forces, "Hell-fire is behind you, Paradise is before you." Under such constraint it would be entirely impossible to predicate the sublime heroism which these disciples exhibited in future years. Moreover, no such multitude as were brought into the Church would have answered the Christian summons. Men are truly splendid when they defy despotism, though their very remonstrance may bring them personal destruction. It is impossible not to admire men who, under a false conception of God, resist even to the death what they regard as the unjust demands of the Eternal. No threat could have won the disciples to such fidelity as they manifested under the inspiration of love.

The distinction between friends and slaves in relation to Him whom they serve is this: The slave knows not what his master is doing, or why he is doing it. "All things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you," is Christ's designation of the superior advantages of friendship. Confidential relations were thus established, and these disciples were permitted to enter into the mystery of His mission, and into the plans which He had devised for its execution. An officer of the government complained the other day that a rule of the service in which he was engaged made it impossible for him and his fellows to proffer any complaint or to suggest any change without the certainty of punishment being meted out to them. In all branches of co-operative work it has been found desirable to admit servants to a certain confidential knowledge of the operations conducted. Business corporations find that the old idea of ruling employees by despotic law does not secure the best results, and the leaders in such commercial move-



ments are now speaking about the wisdom of "socializing business." A father takes his son into intimate fellowship with him, and discovers that by this policy he commands the affectionate loyalty of the youth. Jesus has before Him a world-embracing enterprise, nothing less than the salvation of the entire race, and He admits His disciples into the plan of it, fires their imaginations, enlivens their intelligence, makes them participants in His work, and glorifies them with the reward which gladdens His own heart. It is a significant fact that Jesus staked the whole issue of His divine adventure on the loyalty of His friends. There is no sufficient way to account for the progress of His influence in the world on any other ground than that of His continued presence with these friends. He has fulfilled His promise, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. . . . Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Humanly speaking, He entrusted the whole development of His mission to His disciples and their successors. He gave them an outline of His scheme of world-conquest, and virtually said, "I expect you to work this out because you are My friends." That is rather different from the practice of great men generally, who mark out restrictions and directions, appoint trustees or executors, and hedge them in with severe legal requirements, making independence of action quite impossible. But Jesus said, "I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit." He committed His great program to the affectionate loyalty of His disciples and their successors; and His wisdom is being justified by the results.

The condition under which servitude rises to friendship and coalesces with it is love—simple human love—an unbreakable attachment running out into any kind of sacrifice demanded, and becoming divine when it reaches a willingness to die for the object of affection. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Jesus virtually says, "You must love one another like that, if you are to be My

friends; for I have loved you enough to give My life for you. This is My commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." Not a man who heard this address was unwilling to show his friendship for Jesus to the extent indicated. It is true that these disciples all forsook Him and fled, and that one of them denied Him; but that was in time of panic, before they had been fortified by divine grace. Later nearly all of them, if tradition may be trusted, gladly suffered martyrdom in defense of their faith. Now, giving life for others is giving it for Christ. Such a surrender does not necessarily involve physical death, but it does require the expenditure of life in the interest of others. Bolingbroke said, "A friend is a man who will go to hell with you." A slight modification of his words will make them true. A friend is one who will go to hell *for* you, as Jesus descended into the darkness and sin of this world to save mankind.

Are we to be servants by the voluntary method, which becomes involuntary under the spell of a great obligation, or are we to follow Christ under the compulsion of a necessity springing from our anxiety to save our own souls? It requires no reflection to designate the former motive as the divinely excellent one. Jerome Savonarola, writing to his mother while he was a wandering Dominican monk, says: "I have voluntarily given myself to be a slave for the love of Jesus, who for love to me made Himself man and became a slave to set me free. For the love of Him I am laboring in His vineyard in divers cities, and that not solely for the salvation of my own soul, but for the souls of others." This is the motive which should inspire every disciple whom Jesus calls His friend.

## XII.

### THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

#### CHAPTER XV, 26—XVI, 1-15.

We seem to be within a charmed circle, and to be listening to one who will not let us go until he has had his say; until he has placed before us, in words which the most simple-minded can comprehend, truths which are not of this world nor are to be measured by those of this world.—*Plummer*.

JESUS has twice before in these discourses referred to the Comforter. (xiv, 16, 17; 26.) Attention has been given these passages at the proper place in our notes (see pages 91-93; 113-115), but it seems well for the sake of a compendious and convenient treatment of this important theme to group these references with the passage immediately before us. The introduction of this subject recurrently in Christ's farewell message marks the absence of any formal method. The colloquial character of the discourses is thus indicated. Yet there is a certain logical order in the presentation of the matter; for, first, we have the promise of the Paraclete and a description of His character (xiv, 16, 17), and then the gradual unfolding of the offices of the Spirit, which are: to teach and quicken the memory of His disciples (xiv, 26); to bear witness to Christ (xv, 26); to convict the world (xvi, 8-11); to enlighten the Church (xvi, 13-15). The promise of the Paraclete is made in view of the necessities of the disciples on account of their Lord's departure. The Comforter will come as the result of a covenant. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments"—that is their side of the compact; "and I will pray the

Father"—that is Christ's side. The Spirit of truth will be the Comforter by abiding forever. This revelation the world can not receive because it will appear to be unreal to those who have no sympathy with the spiritual objects of Christ's mission.

The teaching office of the Paraclete is emphasized in the second of these passages (xiv, 26), where the title of "Holy Ghost" is used, the word "holy" answering to the character which the Spirit of truth must bear, though the title is a personal name. The Holy Spirit's teaching will be twofold: It will stimulate the memory to recall Christ's words in new and stronger light (xiv, 26), and it will contain things about the person and mission of Christ which could not be comprehended during His earthly career. (xvi, 12.) The New Testament Scriptures themselves rest for their authenticity on the fulfillment of these promises, as do also the most modern applications of the truth to current questions. Three kinds of ministry are said to be performed by the Holy Spirit in the passage before us: 1. Testimony to Christ; 2. Conviction of the World; 3. Illumination of the Church.

#### **I. THE SPIRIT'S WITNESS TO CHRIST. (xv, 26—xvi, 1-7.)**

"The Comforter" and "the Spirit of truth" identify one person with two titles, as in chapter xiv, 16, 17, and elsewhere. Compare "whom I will send unto you" and "which proceedeth from the Father" with "the Father shall give you another Comforter" (xiv, 16), and "whom the Father will send in My name" (xiv, 26). The unity of the Trinity can not be more specifically declared.

The witness of the Holy Spirit is to Christ because He is the supreme revelation of God to man. All truth inheres in Him who said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." The world has not received Him in personal manifestation. He must be made known by testimony. His own witness must be confirmed through all generations by the witness of the Holy Spirit in the consciences of men. It is a witness corroborated by human

testimony. Rather the witness of the Holy Spirit through human testimony will be made in accordance with the conditions of human intelligence. The testimony of the Holy Spirit will be reliable because He is the Spirit of truth which "proceedeth from the Father." The witness of Christ's disciples will be valuable because they have been with Christ from the beginning. Yet the testimony is one, though given in two forms. The apostles said: "We are His witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost." (Acts v, 32; xv, 28.)

The love which Jesus bears His disciples and the solicitude He feels with respect to their full understanding of all that will confront them, now leads Him to break away from the consideration of the Spirit's mission, which He will resume further along (8), and to recur to the hatred of the world which He has been explaining a little before. The omission of the first seven verses of chapter xvi would bring this passage into direct and logical connection with the further treatment of the Spirit's mission; but Jesus is guided by the impressions of the moment, and what He has just said about their witness suggests the condition in which these men will soon find themselves. Hence He makes another reference to the treatment they will receive from the world. What He is saying on this matter is inspired by the wish to forestall the effect which might be produced upon them if they were not prepared for the experiences yet to come. What they had expected was an open manifestation of their Lord to the world. What they are to receive is hostility of the world. Jesus, therefore, both warns and encourages them (1-3). They will be excommunicated. (ix, 22; xii, 42.) Some of them will be murdered on the plea of a religious obligation. The persecutions they suffer will be caused by the spiritual, but willful, ignorance of their oppressors. (xv, 21-24.) It is well for them to hear all this now, so that when the afflictions come they may remember that their Lord forewarned them. This will sustain their faith in Him, and be a source of comfort. These things had been intimated before (Matt. x, 16-39; xxiv, 9; Luke vi, 22),

but now they were explained more fully, and in connection with Christ's departure and the coming of the Spirit. This was not essential while He was with them, nor would they have heeded His words if they had been given; but now He is going away, and they must know the whole truth.

Still they do not seem to fathom Christ's meaning when He declares that He is going to the Father (5). Peter had asked, "Whither goest Thou?" (xiii, 36), but he did not understand his own words, nor was he ready for Christ's explanation of His departure. The disciples, as a whole, are even now so submerged in profound sorrow that they do not inquire whither He is going. Their uppermost thought is, "He is about to leave us" (5, 6). Nevertheless there is light in the darkness. They are to feel the heavy hand of oppression, which will be the more terrible in view of their isolation; but this apparent loss will have its compensation in the coming of the Spirit. "It is expedient for you that I go away" (7). The advantages which they would now enjoy would be: First, they would emerge from the elementary instruction suitable for children, afforded them by Christ's bodily presence, to that free and independent development of their characters which belongs to maturity; second, they would pass out of that fleshly conception of Christ's mission, which had always retarded their progress, into that spiritual apprehension of their Lord's work which alone could make them the disciples he intended them to become. Moreover, if Christ did not depart, the Spirit would not come. The manifestation of the Holy Spirit to their spirits was not possible until they had taken their eyes away from the visible Christ. One dispensation could not begin until that which preceded it had been finished.

## II. THE SPIRIT'S CONVICTION OF THE WORLD.

(xvi, 8-11.)

Jesus now resumes the subject from which He had been diverted by His regard for the disciples' immediate need. The Spirit is to be sent to them because through



them Christ is to fulfill His mission. The Spirit's work will be, first, to convict the world, and then to enlighten the Church. He will establish the world's sin in its own consciousness by vindicating the work of Christ. Conviction as here used includes the functions of examination, proof, judgment, and punishment.

The Spirit will convict the world in respect of the ground of the world's rejection of Christ, which is the root-sin of unbelief, created by the selfishness which draws the soul apart from God and provokes it to assert the will of man in opposition to the divine will. The witness of the spirit to Christ, whom the world repudiates, is thus seen to be the world's true condemnation.

The Spirit will convict the whole world in respect of righteousness, a word used only this once in John's Gospel. It here signifies that worth which was manifested in Christ and which is superior to all human justice and to all keeping of laws and ordinances, being not merely external goodness, but holiness of character, without which no man can be acceptable to God. Jesus, the supreme exemplar of it, is now to depart to His Father, but the Spirit will make it plain to the consciences of all that the ideal of righteousness is manifested in Him. Their very recognition of this righteousness will confirm their guilt.

The Spirit will also convict the world in respect of judgment, correcting those earthly standards which have assigned victory to apparent rather than real measures of success. Though the passion and death of Christ may seem to evidence the triumph of Satanic power, they actually reveal Christ's own victory. The prince of this world is overthrown and judged by the Spirit's testimony concerning Christ to the human conscience.

### III. THE SPIRIT'S ILLUMINATION OF THE CHURCH.

(12-15.)

The progressive character of Christian revelation is now declared. Christ's disclosures are timed to suit the limitations of His disciples' minds and spiritual development. His teaching about some of the things to come

would not be understood until they had actually occurred. The office of the Holy Spirit in guiding the souls of men into all the truth is our warrant for believing in the inspiration of the New Testament Scriptures. But the promise of guidance applies also to the whole period subsequent to the closing of the canon of Scripture. The Church perpetually rejoices in the possession of divine inspiration. What purports to be specific revelation to individuals, however, must be tested by comparison with Christ's original teachings, for there are to be no separate or secondary revelations of truth. The Spirit "will not speak from Himself." For the things of the future which relate to the development of the Church and the destinies of men, illumination rather than prediction is required. But all enlightenment will focalize on the person and mission of Christ. "He shall testify of me." (xv, 26.) "He shall glorify me." (xvi, 14.) This has evidently been done through the writings of the apostles and in Christian literature generally, for in these Christ is magnified. All supposed revelations must accord with the character and doctrine of Christ, if they are to find acceptance with the spiritually illumined.

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### The Guidance of the Spirit.

*When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all the truth.*—JOHN xvi, 13.

In his farewell address to our Pilgrim Fathers, just before they sailed from Delft in the *Mayflower*, John Robinson said: "I am convinced that the Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from His Holy Word." That prophecy has been fulfilled in manifold ways, and is in harmony with the expectations which Jesus excited when, in His farewell address, He said to His disciples: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye can not bear them now." This was an extraordinary announcement in view of the wonderful disclosures of truth He had made to them during the three years

of His public ministry. Moreover, He had just been crowding into an hour deliverances of such sublime depth and fullness that devout study in all the centuries since His departure has not begun to exhaust their meaning. Yet, in order that what had been given might be understood, much more must be imparted. But these supplemental revelations could not be made now, for at this point in the spiritual development of His disciples they would not be comprehended. The Master's words are like those of a father saying to his child when asked for the program devised for him, "I can not tell you all; but you will know all in good time;" or, like the teacher saying to his forward pupil, "You must digest the multiplication table before I can carry you into the higher mathematics;" or, like a merchant saying to his agent, "When you have finished the work now assigned to you, I will telegraph you further instructions;" or, like a monarch saying to the representative of the government, "When you have executed your commission at Rome, I will communicate my commands for your further movements." So Jesus says: "I am going away: I have much more to tell you, but you are not in condition to receive it now. I will keep in touch with you. I will send another to you, and when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all the truth."

How important this consideration was to the disciples we can readily perceive. We observe that, when Jesus did tell them some of the deeper truths, they were not intelligent enough to appreciate them, or they were scandalized at His words. An illustration of this is Peter's remonstrance when Jesus told him of His approaching death and resurrection: "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee." The meaning of Christ's passion, which was obscure to their minds now, would become clear after His resurrection and ascension, when they could receive and interpret His teaching concerning these mysteries. The weight of the cross was now too heavy for them to bear. Afterward they would say, with Paul, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Until that time

they must content themselves with what Jesus had given. As Canon Bernard declares, "He says things here which He would not have said a year before." And He will say other and equally wonderful things when the maturity of their spiritual growth will permit.



These supplementary revelations would be made by the Spirit of truth. "He will guide you into all the truth." The Spirit of God moving upon the spirits of men would make further disclosures. This promise was fulfilled in the production of the New Testament Scriptures. Our Gospels are accounted for by the promise of Jesus, "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." The question is often asked, "Are the New Testament writings outside of the Gospels of equal authority with the Gospels?" The answer is in this declaration of Christ, "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all the truth." This was not new truth, an original revelation, but a further exposition of truth, which had been previously given in germ. Truth is eternal, but the manifestations of truth vary according to the needs and qualifications of those to whom truth is imparted.

Memory would play a very important part in these future revelations of truth. The Lord's Supper was instituted partially as a memorial, "Do this in remembrance of Me." The associations of this holy institution would forever bring Christ into clear recollection. We are acquainted with the effects produced on memory by various and peculiar causes. Disease itself frequently operates to sharpen the exercise of those functions of the brain which enable us to remember. Coleridge has given a famous illustration of this in his story of the servant who, in the midst of her delirium, quoted passages from Hebrew, Greek, and Latin writings with which she could have had no acquaintance, but which, it was subsequently

ascertained, she had heard repeated by a Jewish rabbi, in whose house she had lived for many years. Certain cerebral irritations will produce most wonderful phenomena. Under the influence of a special excitement of the nervous organism we suddenly remember that which has been forgotten for long years. One of John Wesley's preachers declared that he was converted by the renewed impression of a text of Scripture which he had heard his father quote while sitting on his knee as a child. These analogies enable us to understand how the operation of the Holy Spirit upon their intellectual life would affect the memory of these disciples in a more wonderful and exalted manner, and make it possible for them to recall with exactness the teachings of their Lord. They would then see the truth of these teachings in remembrance, dissociated from confusing circumstances, more clearly than when they first heard them delivered. This is the meaning of what Jesus frequently said: "I have told you before it came to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe;" and will also account for the record which John himself occasionally bears: "These things understood not His disciples at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him." Under the influence of the same spiritual illumination Christians of to-day may be presumed to understand the truth of Christ's teachings more fully than could His own disciples, for Christian experience is one of the most reliable sources of spiritual instruction, and many devout souls find their most satisfactory proof of religion in the testimony of their own inner consciousness. Tennyson's lines beautifully express this function of a religious experience:

"If e'er, when faith had fallen asleep,  
I heard a voice, 'Believe no more,'  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason's colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answered, 'I have felt.'"



The promise of Jesus that the Holy Spirit would guide His disciples into all the truth is also fulfilled in the providential development of the Christian Church. All great revival movements, such as those under Luther and Wesley, give evidence that the Spirit of God has been communicating fuller revelations of truth to the modern Church than were given to the primitive Christians; and each of these great movements has been characterized by the larger comprehension of some single truth than was possible in the time of its original proclamation.

Christ's promise is further fulfilled in the experience of individual Christians who find that a truth of the catechism which has been lying dormant in their minds for many years, or of a Scripture passage which they committed to memory in childhood, takes on new and startling significance under the effect of divine enlightenment. A lawyer said recently that his doubts concerning the future life were swept away in a moment as he listened to the reading of words which he had heard since his boyhood, but which now started forth in his soul with convincing impressiveness, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." A woman whose soul had been tormented by the conviction that she had committed a most grievous sin in relation to her parental duties, and who had suffered long years under the heavy burden of remorse was instantly relieved of her anguish by a single sentence spoken by Moody, the evangelist. In both these instances the Spirit of God seized upon an opportunity in the intellectual and spiritual life of an earnest human being to make the truth more vivid and effective.

This promise will have further fulfillment in future ages. It is absurd to talk about the narrowing character of the Christian religion. No limit can be placed upon the development of the thought of seekers after truth under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Hymns, sermons, religious essays, personal testimony, and a great variety of spiritual expression will be employed by the Spirit of God in elaborating revealed truth. Vinet says,



truly: "The world will come to an end when Christianity shall have spoken its last word."



The supplemental revelations, like those which precede them, will be centered in the person and mission of Christ. They will not be original disclosures, but the unfolding of ampler glories of Christ. "He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." Essentially there is no new truth, but there may be new interpretations of truth. The octave provides all the music in the world. No man will ever add another note to the scale. But infinite combination produces an infinite variety of music. The primary colors are fixed. No new ones will ever be discovered. But shades in endless variety are developed from them. No elements are now in existence which were not in the universe when it was brought forth, but innumerable substances and compounds have been produced therefrom. It is so with Christian truth. The Spirit takes the original declarations of Christ and informs the mind of their larger meaning.

The scientist says: "I have ascertained some things about the universe which you do not know. You believe God made the world; I will show you how He made it. You see the stars; look through this telescope and discover what your unaided vision could never behold. You see the leaf; take this microscope and discern what you could never conceive of without this valuable appliance. You see the light; let me put a beam of it through a spectroscope, while you behold its unbraided filaments." So truth is explained and elaborated by the interpreting influence of the Holy Spirit, who takes the sublime verities of the faith and makes them clearer and richer. The dealer in gems turns them about in the palm of his hand, puts them in certain relations to the light, in order to bring out their beauties, knowing how best to exhibit their charm; so the Holy

Spirit brings out the truth of the Christian gospel, taking the things of Christ and exhibiting them in a way known only to the divine mind. But always the purpose is to glorify Christ; that is, to make Him clearer and more intelligible. That is the true test of all supposed new revelations. Are they true to Christ? Do they glorify Him? The mystics have always been contending that they have received new truth. What they mean is that they have obtained new interpretations of old truth. Are their interpretations correct? If they harmonize with the "faith once for all delivered to the saints," they are correct. John says: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God." Do they glorify Christ, or do they obscure Him? There is the sufficient test for new theologies, new religions, new sects. Is this thing which men ask us to accept born of the Holy Spirit or of an evil spirit? That depends on whether it is true to Christ, whose character we know, whose spirit we recognize, whose teaching we can verify. Is the new theology something that Christ did not teach, and which is opposed to His recognized revelation and spirit? Then away with it; for Christ, who promised that the Holy Spirit should guide us into all the truth, also admonished us that this advanced revelation would be in conformity to His original teaching. "He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you."

### XIII.

## FROM SORROW TO JOY.

### CHAPTER XVI, 16-24.

Here we have also the true sources of Christian consolation under persecution, and the strongest motives to faith, patience, constancy and mutual love in every situation wherein Providence may place us.—*Campbell.*

THE opening sentences of this division of our Lord's farewell message connect themselves in thought with verses 5 and 6 of this chapter, the teaching concerning the Holy Spirit's mission having been inserted after these verses as a ground of comfort to those who should experience the world's enmity. There is still need for further consolation, and this Jesus will supply by alluding to other relations to Himself which His disciples will soon understand, though they are now but vaguely apprehended. On account of their present perplexity Jesus resumes the conversational form of address, being impelled to it first by inquiries among themselves (17, 18), and then by remarks directed to Himself (29, 30). The crisis is now at hand which is to plunge them into the deepest sorrow, but it will be followed by events which will turn their grief into gladness and give them a fuller participation in the life of their Lord. Jesus first awakens solicitude in their minds, and then gives them encouraging assurances.

#### I. THE PERPLEXITY OF THE DISCIPLES. (16-18.)

The perplexity of the disciples is caused by the recurrence of the mysterious words "a little while." Seven times these words are used in the compass of a few sen-

tences, "emphatically encouraging His own disciples to rise above the limitations of time and enjoy the habits of eternity," says Reynolds. The first interval doubtless refers to His swiftly approaching death; the second to His resurrection, though it is not limited to that, as the instructions which follow make evident. Moreover, the verbs employed mark a distinction in seeing which will not permit us to confine the second "a little while" to Christ's bodily reappearance. "A little while, and ye shall not behold Me" (with the outer physical vision); "and again a little while, and ye shall see me" (with the inner spiritual vision). This new perceiving would begin with the resurrection of Christ from the dead, when His glorification would be partially accomplished. It would be more adequately realized with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost; and it would be continuously developed in the life of the Church during all subsequent ages. The risen and ascended Lord, having manifested Himself to the eye of sense, would "remain before the eye of faith not as a memory, but as a presence."—*Bernard*. "It is because Jesus returns to the Father that He can again be seen by believers through the Holy Spirit." (vii, 39; xvi, 7.) *Godet*.

But these disciples could not apprehend this teaching immediately. It would evidence itself in their experience later. Now they exclaim, "What is this that He saith unto us?" (17, 18.) They naturally contrast the promise of Christ's future companionship with the declaration made a few minutes before, "I go to My Father" (10). These statements seem irreconcilable. "We can not tell what He saith," they murmur to one another. Their perplexity is not strange when one considers the order of events which Jesus has outlined: death, causing a brief absence; resurrection, providing temporary association; departure, ushering in an abiding presence.

## II. THE COMFORT OF THE MASTER. (19-24.)

The question which the disciples had not ventured to propose to their Lord He now takes up, and, as on former

occasions, responds rather to the spirit of their inquiry than to their words. A specific statement of his death and resurrection, such as He had often made and which they had refused to understand, would not have answered their present needs or fulfilled their Master's purpose so well as the words which he now addresses to their spiritual consciousness; for He is desirous of preparing them not merely for his resurrection, but for his entire glorification.

Jesus now draws a contrast between the sorrow of His disciples and the rejoicing of the world which will be occasioned by His departure after the first "little while," and then forecasts the joy which His followers will experience after the second "little while," their mourning having been turned into gladness (20). An illustration is used which frequently appears in Scripture (Psalm xlviii, 6; Isa. lxvi, 7-11; Jer. iv, 31; vi, 24; Hos. xiii, 13; Mic. iv, 9), the application of which is sufficiently obvious, though attempts have been made to interpret it as referring more broadly to the institution of the Messianic kingdom through the sufferings of Jesus (21).

Sorrow was already flinging its somber pall over these disciples, for the cross was directly in the foreground of their vision; but joy would swiftly succeed, for Jesus would see them again (22). The intercourse thus renewed would never be broken. Here Jesus surely indicates not only His resurrection, which would be the beginning of their joy, but an uninterrupted fellowship, which the Holy Spirit would insure, in fulfillment of Christ's promise. (Matt. xxviii, 20; 1 Peter i, 8.)

With the opening of that new dispensation following Christ's resurrection, their intercourse with Christ will not be closed, but changed in its mode. They will no longer put questions to Him familiarly, as they have freely done in the past, but they will address their appeals to the Father in His name (23). The necessity for revelations from Christ will have disappeared, because the Spirit will continue to enlighten them, and they will have a more confidential relation to the Father through him. This will be a new experience for

them (24). They have been asking Him in person, not asking the Father through Him. Henceforth they will make their petitions in His name, and whatsoever they shall ask through His mediation they shall obtain. Let them be free in asking, that the Father may be free in giving, and so raise their joy to its fullest possible measure.

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### The Vision Sublime.

*A little while, and ye behold Me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me.*—JOHN xvi, 16 (Revised Version).

A memorial has recently been placed in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, to Sir John Stainer, who was organist in that temple of worship from 1872 to 1888, and was one of the most renowned English composers. A medallion portrait of the musician in white marble is surmounted by a representation in relief of Isaiah's vision. A figure symbolizing God, the Father, is seated upon a throne, above which broods a dove with outstretched wings, typifying the Holy Spirit. Surrounding the figure on the throne are cherubim. Below is an altar from which a great cloud of incense is rising to heaven. At its side the prophet is kneeling with extended arms. Underneath, and just above the medallion, is a scroll bearing the words, "I saw the Lord." Nothing could be more admirable as a memorial to one who felt himself divinely inspired for the performance of his work. It fires one's imagination to conceive of such a mind pervaded by a sublime vision of the eternal. The greatest work in the world has always been wrought by men who have been lifted to unwonted heights of thought and feeling by personal communion with God.

What has thus been achieved through a consciousness of the divine presence enables us to understand the meaning of these words of Christ, and those others in the same discourse spoken a little earlier: "Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me." Our



Lord's disciples were puzzled by such utterances because Jesus had said he was going to the Father. Others reading them have experienced a similar feeling. In the case of our text the Revised Version has given some assistance in interpretation, and has measurably expressed the shades of meaning contained in the original language from which the translation is made. "A little while, and ye *behold* Me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall *see* Me." Every one recognizes the difference between beholding and seeing. The former is limited to an external vision; the latter is broad enough to include any kind of internal perception. The blind man says: "I am glad to see you," and he speaks with precision; for while he can not behold his friend, he is able to see him by the subtle power of personal communion. Jesus said: "A little while, and ye shall not behold Me—I will pass from mortal vision; again a little while, and ye shall see Me—I will remain forever in personal communion with you." This means that to these disciples Jesus would not be a fading memory, but an abiding presence; not a picture growing more indistinct as the passing years dimmed the impression on their minds, but a personal possession, ever becoming more vivid as the experience of fellowship with Him continually deepened. This glorious privilege promised to His disciples belongs equally to all souls who have the sense of spiritual communion with him.



All the objective visions of Christ which are reputed to have appeared to men in the course of the centuries since his departure have doubtless had their origin in a subjective consciousness of the divine presence. Readers of religious biography will recall such instances of glorified apparitions as are recorded of St. Thomas Aquinas, who, being asked by the exalted person who visited him in his devotions what reward should be meted out to him for his fidelity, answered, "Nothing but Thyself, O Lord,"—of Colonel Gardiner, the ungodly soldier, whose sinful career was stopped by a vision of Christ on the

cross saying to him, "All this I did for thee; wilt thou do naught for Me?"—of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, who, placing a poor leper in her own bed and carefully attending to his needs, found him to be the Man of Sorrows—of the mediæval monk, celebrated in Longfellow's "Legend Beautiful," who, at the dictate of duty, turned regretfully away from a vision of Christ on the altar of the monastery that he might minister to the needs of the poor and the sick who were clamoring for relief, and found upon his return the apparition still more glorious, and heard the words, "If thou hadst tarried, I had fled." If we had these visions placed in order, one after another, we should discover as great differences in the countenance of the Master as exist in the various imaginative pictures with which devout artists have filled their canvases. Yet one personality suggested them all. The soul's conception of the glorified Redeemer determined the characteristics of the portrait in each instance. In Isaiah's vision the prophet declares that he saw "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." Standing about the throne he saw six-winged seraphim. He also heard these celestial beings crying to one another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory." He saw the posts of the door moved at the voice of this salutation, "and the house was filled with smoke." Here was a super-sensuous vision conceived in the mind of the prophet under divine inspiration, but embodying characteristics which were determined by the man's training and environment. In all the visions which men have of their Lord, peculiarities will occur which have been shaped by the beholder's mental conceptions of Christ.



Christians often fancy that if Christ were now present in visible form, the world would be more readily convinced of His power and authority, and His followers would be more easily encouraged and sustained in their devotion. It is this feeling which has influenced Chris-

tians to insist upon a visible head of the Church, and has given such persistent power to the Roman Catholic communion. If, instead of a Pope, whom every one knows to be a man with ordinary human limitations, we could have Christ occupying the throne in the capital of Christendom, or moving through the world to direct and control His Church, the advance of the kingdom of righteousness, they assert, would be much more rapid than it is at present. But such persons forget the facts of history and ignore the constitution of the human mind. When Jesus was on earth His visible presence hindered, rather than helped, the development of faith. His disciples were always fixing their minds upon the person of their Lord. They found it difficult to realize His spiritual character so long as He was with them in the flesh. They increasingly apprehended it when He had been removed, and they saw Him with the eye of the spirit. The understanding of any character is subject to the same embarrassment. The nearer physical view of any man is a hindrance to the right judgment of his worth. A great man's contemporaries rarely see him as he is. The view of his generation usually needs to be corrected by those who come after. The Perfect One, having appeared in the flesh, was misapprehended in the same fashion. The eye of sense virtually obliterated the eye of the spirit. Analogies in the physical realm are easily suggested. If a man confines himself to objects of sense, he does not see with the spirit, and if he looks into the soul of things, he passes beyond the sphere of the senses. Wordsworth has taught us that there is something more in nature than appears in her outer form. Everybody sees the mountains, the lakes, the clouds, the ocean, the trees, the flowers; but only the spiritual eye perceives the inner harmony and beauty of nature. Never until the observer abstracts himself from the merely external view does he see the real meaning of nature or receive her deeper message into his soul. In the last moments of Corot, the French painter, he was seen to move his right hand toward the wall; his fingers appeared to be holding a brush, and he said with animation, "Look! how beautiful

it is. I have never seen such admirable landscapes." The man's sense-perception was clouded by the shadows which death threw into his eyes, but his spiritual perception was quickened to catch the deeper and more glorious revelations of nature. Christ is not to be measured by the appearance He made in Palestine, but by the glory which inheres in His essential character. The soul cares for no portrait of Him made by another. It has constructed its own and invested it with all the moral and spiritual beauties which it is capable of realizing. The portrait exhibits One infinitely great, infinitely wise, infinitely holy, infinitely loving—One who is qualified for all achievement and ready for every sacrifice in behalf of humanity. With that presence the devout Christian has constant fellowship, and this constitutes a perpetual vision of Christ capable of sustaining the soul as no extraordinary and occasional apparition of the Christ could do.



The effect of such a continuous vision upon life and character is quite immeasurable. A lad goes away from his home carrying with him a portrait of his mother, and as often in the distant city as he becomes weary under the burdens of life and disheartened with the obstacles to his progress, or as often as he feels himself drawn away toward evil courses by seductive temptations, he places this portrait before him, and a calm look at the features he loves so well cheers his spirit, refreshes his courage, and helps him to withstand the allurements of sin. In some such fashion as this, but still more impressively, the continuous vision of Christ in the soul sustains, encourages and refreshes the spirit of him who possesses it.

St. Paul had such a vision as this. In recounting the evidences of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead he concludes with the words, "Last of all He was seen of me." He is referring to his experience on the Damascus road, when he was smitten with a blinding light, and heard a voice issuing from the intolerable radiancy summoning him to a new life. In this vision there

was no face or figure seen, but only an overpowering glory. Yet St. Paul declares he saw Christ. Here is an illustration of what has already been said concerning the subjective character of such apparitions. Now this vision not only convinced St. Paul of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, but compelled him to see the waywardness of his course and drove him into the ranks of the Christian apostles.

Stephen, the first Christian martyr, is in the midst of the Jewish Sanhedrim. His enemies are gnashing upon him with their teeth. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." No thoughtful person will declare that Stephen looked into a literal heaven, located far beyond the building which enclosed him and his enemies, but into a celestial realm within his own soul, where Christ was formed—the hope of glory. What is most striking in this vision is that Stephen saw Jesus standing as though He were about to spring forward to deliver him from peril.

John, the apostle, had such a vision on the isle of Patmos, and he records it in these words: "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth went a two-edge sword; and His countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength. And when I saw Him I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." That vision of majesty did not obliterate the memory of the gracious person with whom John had companied in long gone years, but it lifted that remembered figure up into

supernal glory. These visions are typical of those which may visit any soul, and the sustaining power of such manifestations of Christ can not be overestimated. They constitute the supreme need of the Church to-day. What is required is a conception of Christ, the merciful, the compassionate, the pure, and the holy; the all-wise, the all-beautiful, the all-loving One; Christ, the God of all the earth—Christ filling the whole orb of life, in whose hand are the stars, and in whose heart is the world.



## XIV.

### THE CONCLUSION.

#### CHAPTER XVI, 25-33.

No New Testament writer has so vividly conceived the powers of the heavenly world as operative here and now as the Apostle John. If, as his legend describes, he has soared into the sun, he has brought down into our sinful world and common life something of the warmth and glory of the everlasting Light.—*Stevens.*

THE farewell message of Jesus is rapidly drawing to a close. Westcott calls the passage before us "a kind of epilogue to the discourses." It embodies a summary of Christ's relations to His disciples and of the character of His mission. When His followers receive this they are animated by the joy of a clearer perception of His teaching than they have hitherto experienced, and warmly profess the stability of their faith, which, Jesus then admonishes them, is weaker than they suppose. He concludes with assurances of victory after failure, and gives His own triumph over the world as a warrant of their success, thus heartening them for the impending conflict.

In all His previous teachings, as well as in the discourses now approaching their end, Jesus has spoken in language of a figurative nature and with a degree of reserve, which was necessitated by the profound character of the spiritual truths He was enunciating and the immaturity of the thought and experience of the men whom He was addressing. But hereafter, He tells them, He will not employ enigmatical speech, but will give His disciples clear and explicit revelations concerning His relation to the Father. These would be made through the Spirit, to be given in fullness on the day of Pentecost, and to be an abiding presence with them through

all the future. None the less, however, these would be Christ's own utterances to them of things pertaining to His Father (25).

Thenceforth, and forever, they shall pray to the Father in His name. He does not say that He will intercede with the Father in their behalf, because under the new dispensation they will have direct access to the Father, who loves them because they have loved Christ, and have believed that He came from the Father (26, 27), as He had often declared. On the other hand, He does not say He will not pray to the Father for them. Circumstances will doubtless arise making His intercession necessary. So long as they maintain their communion with the Father unbroken, in His name and through the Holy Spirit, there will be no requirement for Christ as an advocate. But should this fellowship be severed by their sin, Christ will be their intercessor before the throne of God. (1 John ii, 1; Rom. viii, 34.)

Jesus now affirms His divine origin and destiny (28). His presence in this world was only designed to be temporary. "This verse would almost form a creed. The Son, of one substance with the Father, was born into the world, suffered, and returned unto the Father."—*Plummer*. "The verse is indeed a brief summary of the whole historic work of Christ; clause answers to clause: the Mission, the Nativity; the Passion, the Ascension."—*Westcott*.

This explicit utterance drives away the last vestige of perplexity from the minds of the disciples (29, 30). It contains nothing essentially new; Jesus has said the same things frequently, but now they are impressed with the meaning of His words as never before. A succinct, compendious statement of truth will often produce an effect which an elaborate dissertation has failed to make. It was so in this instance. The previous teaching of Jesus had imperceptibly prepared their minds for this instantaneous result. To them it seems that the promise to abstain from proverbs has already been fulfilled, and they exclaim, "Now we are sure that thou knowest all things." He had discerned their thoughts (19) and given them

the help they needed. It was evidently not necessary to ask Him questions, as is usual with those of whom assistance is sought, for He knew their inmost thought. On this account they were convinced of His divine origin, and believed in His mission.

After this simple-minded and enthusiastic confession Jesus gently admonishes them that their faith, which is genuine as far as it goes, is not as firm as they fancy; for the time is fast coming when the impulse of fear will scatter them abroad, leaving Him without their support. Yet He will not be alone, for His communion with the Father is constant. By reason of this He will possess an abiding source of comfort (31, 32).

Depressed as the disciples must have been by their Lord's prediction of their failure, the next words spoken by Him must have been most grateful to their hearts. The underlying purpose of His farewell message had been to prepare His followers for what awaited them in the future. Their participation in the life of trust which made Him calm in the presence of distress (xiv, 27), would accomplish this. In the outer life of the world they would have tribulation, but in the inner life of fellowship with Him they would find peace. "I have overcome the world," says Jesus in His last recorded words, apart from His prayer, before He enters into His passion; and He bids His disciples understand that in His strength they too may be victorious. Encouragement and cheer are in the Master's final syllables. Triumph through death is His confident anticipation; and He will inspire His disciples with the hope which sustains Him in the face of trial.

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### Victory!

*These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.—*  
JOHN xvi, 33.

The soul can hear sweet music in these words. They carry a song of triumph such as a commander might

cause his men to sing on the eve of battle, before the victory had been won. Yet there is no martial strain in them, for they are uttered by the Prince of Peace. The remarkable thing about them is, that they are spoken at the moment when Jesus is passing into the darkest hour of His earthly life, when the fury of hell is about to break upon His devoted head. In such a situation it is sublime to speak of victory. The greatest minds have shown their finest temper when apparently overwhelmed by misfortune. Seneca in exile could write: "What was even a death of disgrace to Socrates, who, by entering a prison, made it cease to be disgraceful? Cato was twice defeated in his candidature for the prætorship and consulship; well, this was the disgrace of those honors, and not of Cato. No one can be despised by another until he has learned to despise himself. The man who has learned to triumph over sorrow wears his miseries as though they were sacred fillets upon his brow, and nothing is so entirely admirable as a man bravely wretched." That is a most excellent expression of the Stoic mood touching misfortune, but it does not attain the dignity of the position which Jesus takes, that despite the calamities which have swept over Him, He is yet victorious over every evil circumstance of life. Isaac Walton said: "Affliction is a divine diet, which, though it be not pleasing to mankind, yet Almighty God hath often—very often—imposed it as good, though bitter, physic to those children whose souls were dearest to Him." The truth of this quaint saying has been illustrated in the fortitude of many devout Christians. Richard Baxter, of holy memory, was a sufferer throughout his entire life. "His body," says Dr. James Hamilton, "was often racked with excruciating pain, but his usual complaints were those dull and dreary ailments which sap the strength and exhaust the spirits. Defying the skill of six and thirty doctors, and reducing his attenuated frame to little better than a museum of morbid anatomy, the first wonder is that, amid the premature old age which they induced, he survived for half a century; and another and a greater wonder is that the strong and ardent spirit was daily a conqueror over this

daily dying." Robert Hall, one of England's greatest pulpit orators, was a constant sufferer and was always fearful lest in the paroxysms of his pain he might be betrayed into weakness of conduct; but he performed his work with great success by means of a resolute will, supported by divine grace. Such lives demonstrate the possibility of realizing in our day the spirit which actuated Jesus in saying, "I have overcome the world."



It is evident from Christ's words that the Christian moves and has his being in a dual environment. He is related outwardly to the world and inwardly to Christ. In one of these spheres he will find trouble—"In the world ye shall have tribulation." The other will provide him with rest—"In Me ye have peace." There is a double sense in which the world is understood by the Christian. There is, first, the world of temporal existence—"the present world," to use the Scripture phrase—in which there is sure to be an abundance of tribulation from which the Christian is not more exempt than other persons. Indeed, it would be a misfortune if devout people were put into a class by themselves and saved from all trouble. The sight of it would not be profitable to the unbelieving, many of whom it would exasperate and drive to deeper rebellion. Others would attempt to affect religion as a policy, and there would be an increase of insincere Christians. On the other hand, it would lead to self-righteousness on the part of Christ's disciples, who would be tempted to plume themselves on their fortune and point to it as a proof of their goodness. It would alienate their sympathies from the rest of mankind. Having no sorrow themselves, they would not know how to appreciate the sorrows of others. Christ's adaptation to His mission is made complete through suffering, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us. Christians everywhere are the more effective because they have the experiences of our common humanity in this temporal existence. Exemption from trouble

would make the Christian an abnormal person, and his power to win others to truth would be greatly embarrassed.

In view of these and other considerations, it almost seems an unmanly thing for the Christian to desire to be exempt from trouble simply because he is a Christian; as though he deserved some compensation for his piety. It is far better that he should undergo sorrow with the rest of humanity, and show his worth by the superior manner in which he submits to affliction. He must not feel that he has acquired an insurance policy against tribulation because he has become a Christian. He has not given so much faith for so much protection from trouble. Let him be brave and valiant, and exhibit true fortitude when the woes of life overtake him, showing himself more courageous and cheerful as the sorrows of life multiply upon him.

The world, in the Christian view, is not only this temporal existence, it is also existence in a society pervaded by selfishness. Wordliness is a term of which we have a fairly clear notion, but which we have much difficulty in defining specifically. It means that devotion to self-interest which so evidently characterizes the society of this world. The unspiritual portion of society is animated by the purpose to secure what seems to redound to present personal advantage. The Christian portion of society is looking toward spiritual and eternal interests. Such a difference in aim and spirit is bound to create conflict. Wherever the difference and contrast are most sharply exposed, there the conflict will be most bitter and the tribulations of Christians will be increased. Jesus was very fair to His disciples, and frankly announced what they might reasonably expect. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also." "They shall put you out of the synagogues:



yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." "And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me."

The contention between wordliness and Christian devotion has not ceased. The hostility of a worldly society to the devout Christian is not as brutal as it once was, for society has been refined by the influence of the very religion which it sometimes rejects; nevertheless the breach between Christ's true disciples and the world's citizens is just as wide as ever. If we fail to see this, perhaps it is due to our lack of deep spirituality, or to that worldliness which sometimes creeps into the Church itself, and has thrown a film over the eyes of many Christians. The world's tastes are not those of the spiritually minded. The world's objects are not the same as those of Christians. When these differences are accentuated, and when the two forces which they represent come into competition openly for souls, when the lines are sharply drawn in business, politics, or social life between these diverse elements, there will still be conflict; and where there is conflict there will be wounds and suffering and persecution.

This is to the positive advantage of truth. The Church is always most strong when most under the stress of trial. It is a serious matter for religion when her foes are not easily distinguishable from her friends. The strategy of evil reaches its finest point of efficiency when the differences between the Church and the world can be totally effaced. Then the Church suffers, not by the direct fire of an exposed fight, but by the steady weakening of its numbers, through the insidious bribery of earthly advantage.

The individual Christian who is timorous may fancy that, without opposition from the world, he would be more prosperous as a witness to the truth; but he needs to be reminded that his testimony must provoke opposition in a selfish world in the very nature of things, and that, if there were no opposition to his witness, it would have little significance, since he stands for truth in order

that he may win to righteousness those who are hostile to truth ; and that he would lose a large measure of personal profit if he were not opposed by the world, since character is developed in proportion to the testing to which he is subjected through the world's hostility. Happy is he who has cheerfully accepted this discipline and can say, with Toplady :

“ If, on a quiet sea,  
Toward heaven we calmly sail,  
With grateful hearts, O God, to Thee,  
We'll own the favoring gale.  
  
But should the surges rise,  
And rest delay to come,  
Blest be the tempest, kind the storm,  
Which drives us nearer home.”

That is a sound philosophy of life. It declares that whatever happens to the Christian is for the best. If things are agreeable, let us thank God for them, for life is running smoothly. If things are disagreeable, let us still be thankful, for, though life is moving roughly, it is nevertheless moving, and toward its appropriate end ; for character is thus being strengthened, and character is the chief end of life.



The Christian has trouble in this world, but he has a world in which there is no trouble. Every soul lives in two worlds who has not surrendered entirely to the world of sense. Such an one withdraws from the world of passion, of prejudice and competition, and, entering into the world of himself, looks upon the outer world from the point of vantage which his inner life gives him. This invisible world is furnished with thoughts and emotions and spiritual experiences. Books and music and art and household joys contribute to the enlargement of this inner world ; and in proportion to a man's ability to abstract himself from the outer world is the real dignity of his selfhood.

Jesus lived in such a world as this, the atmosphere

of which was purer and holier than that known to any other man. He removed Himself from the earth world, which buffeted Him, into the heavenly world, where the celestial sunlight bathed Him, and where the fellowship of His Father comforted Him. This retirement He secured through prayer, and in it found companionship to sustain Him in the most bitter trials of His life. He said to His disciples: "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me."

The world into which Jesus withdrew from the irritations of His earthly life was constituted by the presence of God, and such a world could only be pervaded with peace, because God is in Himself peace eternal. There is no conflict in Him. He is never torn by contending emotions. His will is never hostile to His feeling. His attributes are not in conflict. The picture of God's justice contending with His mercy is false to His character. Love is the dominating element of His being. His righteousness is never in question. Virtue with men is attained by struggle with evil. Virtue with God is undisturbed holiness. He is absolute peace.

Now Jesus acquired His serenity by communion with His Father. What He experienced Himself He is eager to transmit to others. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." It is through Him, as a mediating agent, that peace in its divinest quality is brought to the souls of men. "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds *through* Jesus Christ."

Millions of pious souls in the Orient visit the shrines of Gautama and place beautiful flowers upon them with the words, "I take refuge in Buddha," hoping to find in the Nirvana which he proclaimed that rest of soul for which all humanity longs, but the best he could promise was ultimate extinction of personal being as the comforting solution of life's vexatious problem. Millions of

souls in every part of the world say from hour to hour, "I take refuge in Jesus Christ." In Him they find present peace, in Him they will experience eternal rest. The grace of this fellowship with Christ has sustained innumerable souls in hours of direst distress and afforded them the sense of perpetual triumph and the expectation of complete victory over the world.

When the news of Senator Hayne's famous speech in favor of nullification reached the North, a hardy patriot of New England was so depressed by the oration, which he believed to be unanswerable, though false in its spirit and teaching, that he was made ill and finally threw himself upon his bed in an agony of despair. A few days later his daughter brought to him a paper containing Webster's immortal reply to Hayne. At first he refused to read it or to listen to it, but his daughter sat beside him and began to read. As she proceeded, the man's attention was arrested. At length he straightened himself up in bed and, as he became more deeply aroused, broke forth into exclamations of admiration. Finally, as she concluded the reading, he shouted: "Bring me my boots, I am well again!"

In the midst of life's trials the Christian sometimes becomes utterly depressed. It seems to him that no ray of hope falls across his pathway, and that the world steadily deteriorates in moral value. He can look for no triumph of righteousness. Then faith turns his gaze upon the figure of Jesus the Christ, and his spiritual imagination enables him to hear the Master's words, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And remembering the glorious triumph of his Lord, he takes courage again and faces the world with renewed bravery, to gain for himself the victory which overcometh the world.

## XV.

# THE INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

## CHAPTER XVII.

There is no voice which has ever been heard, either in heaven or in earth, more exalted, more holy, more fruitful, more sublime, than this prayer offered up by the Son of God Himself.—*Melanchthon.*

THIS is the greatest of all prayers, because of the Person who offered it, the occasion on which it was delivered, and the comprehensiveness and quality of its contents. It is essentially the Lord's own prayer in distinction from that which He taught His disciples, and which has become the universal heritage of the world. The Synoptists report many occasions when Jesus prayed, but we have in this instance the only record of the full outline of what He prayed. In speaking of the transition from the farewell address of Jesus to this high-priestly prayer, Bernard says, "So discourse to men has passed into converse with God." But this is both a prayer and a discourse in one. It was spoken in the hearing of His disciples, and was thus intended as a source of comfort and inspiration to those who listened to its sublime utterances. In chapter xiii Jesus had taught by symbolic action; in chapters xiv to xvi by familiar discourse. In this chapter He instructs by prayer. As Bengel says: "He prays the Father, and at the same time teaches the disciples." Westcott calls this "a prayer, a profession, and a revelation." All public prayers may be said to involve these elements, and persons who offer them must be conscious that, while they are communing with God, they are doing so audibly, in order that those who accompany them in thought may be helped by their peti-

tions. This purpose of spoken prayer was evidently in the mind of Jesus.

On the question of the language here employed we must remember that Jesus used the Aramaic dialect, the Greek rendering of which can not always be an exact literal equivalent, though it contains the precise substance of what is translated. We may be certain that the thoughts expressed by Jesus are given here faithfully. They transcend the power of any man to invent. Yet they bear the marks of John's style of expression, a fact which in no way invalidates their authenticity.

The place where this prayer was uttered can not be determined with absolute certainty. Perhaps it was offered in the upper room just after the farewell discourses and before Christ and His disciples started for the Mount of Olives; perhaps in the temple courts, where, Westcott thinks, the most appropriate surroundings would be found; perhaps in the open air, as Godet and others believe.

There is something decidedly impressive in the triumphant tone of this prayer, and the question is sometimes asked, "Would Christ have assumed such a manner in immediate prospect of the agony in the garden of Gethsemane?" To which it may be responded that a great soul, even in expectation of such a trial which he knew would issue in victory, could well experience alternations of joy and sadness.

This prayer is an interpretation of the ministry of Christ and a forecast of its results. It is not separated from the farewell discourses, but rather marks their culmination and bears a very close relation to all that has preceded. The ideas contained in the three great sayings with which the farewell discourses opened (xiii, 31-35), are all embodied in this prayer. Having first been given to the disciples, they are now expressed anew in communion with the Father. The prayer naturally falls into three portions: 1. Prayer for Himself; 2. Prayer for His Disciples; 3. Prayer for the Whole Church. Through all of these petitions the glorification of the Son is taught.



## I. PRAYER FOR HIMSELF. (1-5)

Jesus lifts up His eyes to heaven, which He could have done in a covered room or through the open court of the house as well as in the outer air (compare Acts vii, 55), and says, "Father, the hour is come." The word "Father," expressive of Christ's filial claims to be heard, is later accompanied with attributes—"holy Father" (11), "righteous Father" (25). *Abba* is the Aramaic term Jesus doubtless uses, and this was later adopted by the apostles. (Rom. viii, 15; Gal. iv, 6.) Christ offers to the Father His acquiescence in the providential order: "The hour is come." (ii, 4; xii, 23, 27, 28.) The final crisis has been reached. That which could not occur until the divine will gave permission is now to be experienced. The uttermost conflict with the world's power, issuing in Christ's triumph and exaltation through death, is now immediately at hand. By means of it the Father will glorify the Son, in response to the Son's petition. (Phil. ii, 9-11.)

The Son is glorified when His true nature is made clear, and this is accomplished by His victory over death and His ascension to the Majesty on high. In this way His work will continue on earth through the Spirit, though He is restored to heaven. It is for this glorification He prays, and the object of it is the glorification of the Father, which can only be accomplished through the glorification of the Son, since it is only through the Son that men can see and understand the Father. (xiv, 7-10.) God is glorified in proportion as He is known in His true character.

This petition is in correspondence with Christ's mission (2), which is to bring eternal life to those who will receive it, and this Christ could only do through the Father's glorification of Himself. He has been given authority over all flesh for this purpose, and now asks that His mission be completed through exaltation to the Father's throne, in order that there He may exercise His authority fully. "Grant Me the Ascension, that I may be able to bring to pass the Pentecost."—*Godet*.

The definition of eternal life (3) is here given. It

ignores time relations, expresses its qualitative character, and shows that it is attainable in this present world. (iii, 36; v, 24.) Eternal life so described does not consist in a complete but a growing knowledge of the true God, in contrast with the superstitious veneration of the heathen for fictitious gods. (1 Cor. viii, 5-6.) But this knowledge involves also the recognition of Jesus as the Christ whom the Father has sent. This aspect of the truth was particularly necessary for the Jews as well as for the Gentiles. (i, 18; xiv, 6.) No one can know the Father without the Son, nor have eternal life apart from Him whom God sent to reveal and bestow it. This definition of eternal life illustrates the fact that this prayer was intended in large part for the instruction of those who heard it. Their conception of eternal life would be corrected by these wonderful words.

Having anticipated the completion of His work, the Son asks for that glorification which evidences the fulfillment of His mission (4, 5). He has finished the task assigned to His earthly career (compare xix, 30), and has thus glorified, or made intelligible, the Father who sent Him. Now that the humiliation of His fleshly life is about to close, He asks that He may resume the glory which He possessed before His incarnation. The distinct personality of the Son, His pre-existence in the form of God (Phil. ii, 6), His restoration in His perfected humanity (Heb. ii, 9-11) to the heavenly glory He had formerly experienced, are all expressed in these two verses.

## II. FOR HIS DISCIPLES. (6-19.)

"For Himself He has little to ask, but as soon as His word takes the form of intercession for His own it becomes an irresistible stream of most fervent love. Sentence rushes upon sentence with wonderful power, yet the repose is never disturbed."—*Ewald*.

### 1. The Claims of the Disciples (6-10).

Just as Jesus had based His petitions for Himself on the fact that He had finished His work, so He now bases His petition for His disciples on the fact that they have

received His word. They have accepted Him as from God and of God. They belong to the Father, having been given to Christ by Him. They have kept the Father's revelation made to them by Christ. The characteristics of genuine discipleship have thus been exhibited by them (6), and therefore Jesus pleads that they may have special consideration, growing out of what He has done for them and what they have done for themselves. On His part He has manifested the name of the Father; that is, He has revealed His divine character as realized in His own consciousness, and has communicated the knowledge of it to His disciples. On their part, they have accepted this manifestation as truly of God, and have begun to live in the light of it (6-8).

For the outside world Jesus does not now pray, though it is not intimated that He never prays for unbelievers, which would be contrary to fact (21, 23; Matt. v, 44; Luke xxiii, 34); but at this critical moment He concentrates His petitions on His own (9, 10). Indeed He could not offer the supplications in behalf of the unconverted which He now presents for His disciples (11-17). They must first accept Him who wish to become beneficiaries of the prayer He is uttering. This His disciples have done. They belong to the Father and the Son alike. "All Mine are Thine, and all Thine are Mine." This perfect union between Christ and the Father has its counterpart in the union of Christ and His disciples. Through them He is glorified, since they manifest Him to the world.

## 2. The Needs of the Disciples (11-19).

In consequence of Christ's departure His disciples will require special safeguarding. His own presence and fellowship have united them heretofore, but this being withdrawn, their union will be sundered unless they have help from above. If His prayer is answered in their behalf they will maintain a union like that of Christ and the Father (11). He asks that they be kept in the name of the Holy Father; that is, true to the revelation of God which Christ has communicated to them. In this fidelity

Christ has kept them so well thus far that only one of them, and he the son of perdition, has been lost; but now Christ is departing, and He pleads with the Father to exercise His personal care over them, and He does so in the presence of His disciples, in order to heighten their confidence and joy (13). Their need of divine help will be painfully realized by them in the near future, for they will be in conflict with the world's hatred. They have accepted the revelation which Christ gave them, and hence they will suffer the contempt of the world which has rejected that message of love. Between them and the world there can be no sympathy, as there is none between Christ and the world. (xv, 18.) Yet He does not ask that His disciples be taken from the world as He is being separated therefrom, for that would make impossible the fulfillment of their mission; but that they may be protected from evil, or the evil one. (1 John v, 18.)

Not only does Jesus pray that His disciples may be kept while they are in the world, but also that they may be sanctified or consecrated, their continued existence in a hostile world making this necessary to the maintenance of their faith and the success of their work (17-19). This consecration is an advance upon being kept, and it is to be effected "in the truth," which is the word of God both embodied in Christ and communicated by Him. (i, 1-18.) This truth is the element in which they are to exist, and in which they are to be active in the performance of their mission. Their consecration has in view the work to accomplish which they have been sent by Christ even as He has been sent by the Father. Christ has consecrated Himself by a life of service and sacrifice resulting in death (Heb. x, 7-14), and the highest object of His earthly mission will be attained when they have been consecrated in a like spirit.

### III. FOR ALL BELIEVERS. (20-26.)

The prayer now enlarges its compass to include the entire Church brought to faith through the ministry of

His apostles and their successors (20), and by implication this embraces the whole race of mankind who are to be affected by the operations of the Church (21). The limitation in the ninth verse is removed. The form of words, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also," etc., indicates that what has been asked for those who are hearing Christ's words, is also asked for those whom they will influence to believe in Him. That is, Christ prays that they, too, may be kept and sanctified. These objects are sought in order to procure certain results which are now named.

### 1. The Unity of Believers (21-23).

This is a purpose forever foremost in the heart of Christ. It has already had expression in Christ's prayer for His disciples (11), but it is now more fully developed, that its consequences may be anticipated. The whole Church is before the mind of Christ, and the complete oneness of that Church is His supreme desire. This will be a vital and essential union such as exists between the Father and the Son, not dependent upon external relations, but upon an inner fellowship and manifesting perfect love. (Matt. vii, 12; Luke vi, 31; 1 Cor. xiii.) The exhibition of such a loving unity, not in form, opinion, and organization, but in spirit and life, will convince the world that Christ has been sent by God and direct attention to His message; for the center and source of such a unity can only be fellowship with Christ and the Father.

The glory which the Father gives the Son, the Son gives to His disciples, in order to make possible the realization of that spiritual unity by which the world will be made to see that God has sent Christ and has loved His disciples. The glory which the Father gives the Son is the glory of being the instrument of man's redemption, and this glory is shared by all who through sacrifice and service become the divinely used instruments of human salvation. When the world witnesses the oneness of the Church in this supreme aim, the world will be convinced that Christ is the manifestation of God and will accept Him as Savior (23).

## 2. Participation in Christ's Glory (24).

Jesus anticipates the bliss of believers when their mission has been accomplished, as well as their work in fulfilling this mission, and expresses His will in this regard: "That they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory." Christ is conscious that His will is that of His Father. The glory here contemplated is not that of His eternal Sonship, which can not be shared with human beings, but the glory of His incarnation, which is to be consummated at His ascension. The glory of participation in His work of redemption will be theirs immediately, but the glory of which He now speaks will be theirs in the future, when they are restored to Him in heaven. "It is His last will and testament which Christ on the eve of His death here deposits in the Father's hands."—*Plummer*. The confidence of Christ is based on His knowledge of the Father's love, which has been forever extending itself to Him. Here is a suggestion of the eternal relations of the Godhead.

The petitions are now ended, and Jesus in a sense justifies them by reviewing the facts of the world's ignorance of the Father, His own knowledge, and the faith of His disciples (25). He concludes with a summary of the objects of His intercession (25). His revelation is complete, but there are depths of knowledge still to be communicated. (xvi, 13-15.) The disciples' sense of the Father's love for Christ and for themselves will be their perpetual inspiration. It has sometimes been asserted that John's Gospel is not a missionary document because it does not contain the record of Christ's great commission. But, if there were no other evidences to the contrary—and there are many—this prayer, which contemplates the whole world under the influence of Christian love, would be sufficient to correct this misconception of the spirit of the Fourth Gospel.



### A World-Embracing Prayer.

*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: . . . that the world may know Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.*—JOHN xvii, 21-23.

John Milton has drawn a picture of the archangel Michael disclosing to our first parents, for their encouragement after their transgression, a vision of the multiplying human family and the final victory of righteousness over sin through the appearance of a Redeemer. Jehovah is represented in the book of Genesis as unveiling to Abraham a vision of his innumerable posterity, the starry host of an Oriental sky being employed as an illustration to kindle the imagination of the Father of the Faithful. We are told that just preceding his death Moses was permitted, on the summit of Mount Pisgah, to behold the Land of Promise from afar, and to take into his illumined fancy the cities, provinces, government, population, and future triumphs of the Hebrews. Many of the discoverers, explorers, and colonizers of America foresaw, though imperfectly, the ultimate destiny of the Western Hemisphere, having a foreglimpse of that national greatness which lovers of the Republic often proclaim in our day. It is said that Henry Clay once descended from a stage coach in the Alleghenies and stood for a few moments with his cloak wrapped around him, as if he were listening for some distant voice. When he was asked the meaning of his peculiar attitude of attention, he replied: "I am listening for the footsteps of the coming millions."

These analogies assist us to appreciate the prophetic mood of Jesus in the moment when He begins to offer His intercessory prayer on the night before His death. His eye sweeps the horizon of time, and gathers into its field of vision the Church of all ages and every clime. The future lies before His gaze, not as contingent, but

as actual. The whole body of believers is present to His thought and shares in the benefit of His prayer. How shall we realize the sublimity of this divine anticipation? Jesus forecasts the development of His Church; beholds apostles, martyrs, confessors, reformers, ministers, missionaries, congregations, engaged in forwarding the interests of His Kingdom; sees nations pervaded by His gospel, the islands of the sea gathered to His scepter, the whole earth teeming with His followers. He takes all these into His thought, lays them before the Father's throne, and calls down upon them the blessing of God.

The petitions which have just been offered in behalf of His immediate apostles may be presumed to include the whole body of believers through all time. So much seems to be involved in the words "Neither pray I for these alone," etc. "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me." "Sanctify them through Thy truth"—are not these appeals addressed to God for the benefit of all who profess Christ's name? He asks that they may be kept, knowing the struggles with the world in which they will be engaged. He looks down the widening centuries and beholds the trial of their faith, the ordeal of temptation, the test of ridicule, the fight with philosophic paganism, the fires of persecution through which they must pass. He sees Christians flung to the wild beasts in the Coliseum, their bodies burned to light up Nero's palace gardens. He sees them hiding in the Catacombs to worship. He watches their long contest with heathenism issuing in victory. He sees the bewildering struggle with worldliness in our own century, the Church at war with custom, tradition, earthliness. And that innumerable company, not *en masse*, but as individual confessors, He envelops with His prayer. He said to the impulsive disciple: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." So He may be conceived as praying for each of us. In the most critical hour, overtaken by a temptation so enchanting that evil becomes good, when the devil appears like an angel of light, and

the soul longs for the delicious fruits of sin, even though destruction follows, then remember that Christ's prayer is lodged against you, that it lies across your path, that you can not walk into perdition without brushing it aside. He has asked that you may be kept.

But He prays also that His disciples may be sanctified or consecrated, even as He has consecrated Himself. "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world." It is not enough that they be kept from the evil; they must advance in holiness until they become effective forces for godliness in the world. They have been set apart and commissioned as saviors of society. That is a conception of the Church none too prevalent yet; but it is Christ's interpretation of discipleship. The Church is not such an ark as that in which Noah and his household were floated on the bosom of the deluge. It is not a palisaded park, in which choice fruits and flowers are preserved for specially favored mortals. It is not a museum of rare and costly exhibitions. People who are called Christians are, to use Thoreau's phrase, to be "not only good, but good for something." They are not only beneficiaries, but benefactors. The consecration of His followers for which Christ prays is the complete surrender of their lives to the passion to be helpful.



Jesus evidently proposes to win the world to Himself. He is convinced that He will have the world when the world believes that God has sent Him. He is confident that the world will believe God has sent Him as soon as His followers are one.

That Jesus proposes to capture the world is obvious, not only from this prayer, but from manifold utterances during His ministry. No other construction can be placed on such words as, "This gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations." No other interpretation can be made of those parables which illustrate the gradual but triumphant

extension of truth through human society. Wherever His purpose is misunderstood there is hesitation about yielding Him entrance for the accomplishment of His design. In many quarters Jesus is under suspicion. It is not perceived that if He once secured the world for His own, the dream of universal happiness would be realized. Consequently His work of conquest is retarded.

Ruskin and his publisher went to Switzerland with the purpose of building a chalet, but failed through local jealousy. Unable to see why any one should wish to secure a waste of barren rock, with pasturage only for a few goats in the summer, the authorities suspected that Ruskin had discovered a gold mine or a coal bed, owing to his frequent visits with a geological hammer and carrying a basket for the collection of mineralogical specimens. The price of the property he desired to obtain was, therefore, raised to such an exorbitant figure that he could not acquire it. A like misconception of Christ's motive has interfered with the fulfillment of His mission in many hearts and lives.

When the United States took possession of the Philippine Islands, first by authority of the guns which thundered over Manila Bay, and finally by the payment of a vast sum of money to the Spanish crown, jealousy prompted some of the nations of Europe to cry out in protest, on the supposition that America designed only the extension of her power round the globe, though our statesmen have constantly affirmed the intention of this government to grant political independence to these islands when they have been sufficiently instructed to make such a dignity practical. Under similar misapprehension of the purposes of Jesus, humanity has frequently resisted His advances, not perceiving that He is impelled by the purpose to redeem the world from all ignorance and evil, and to make it a veritable paradise by saving society from the curse of sin through His personal sovereignty over human hearts. Jesus looks forward to the time when that which was pictured by Paul shall be fulfilled: "At the name of Jesus every knee shall

bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

Jesus is convinced that He will have the world when the world is convinced that God has sent Him. This conviction is grounded on the assumption that the world is anxious for some clear message direct from God; a supposition which is warranted by the frantic eagerness with which alleged prophets and seers of God have always been welcomed by the populations of the globe. The history of all religions sufficiently demonstrate this. Jesus always exhibited a desire to be approved by the multitude as a messenger of God. At the grave of Lazarus He prayed: "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me, and I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me." He was desirous of linking Himself with God in the popular conception, believing that humanity is always solicitous to know God. No ambassador displaying the credentials of his government, no soldier exhibiting his medals and decorations, no professional man offering his academic diplomas, could experience a greater desire to establish his credit among men than was evinced by Jesus in His earnestness to be known as God's representative.

Jesus is confident that the world will believe God has sent Him as soon as His followers are united; hence His specific petition for His Church is that its members may be one, even as He and the Father are one. None but the Son of God would have dared such an ambitious prayer. The result sought has never been paralleled in any department of human thought and action. In politics, commerce, education, reforms, and other world movements, alliances are no sooner formed than they begin to disintegrate. If the religionists who bear one name could ever be brought into substantial unity, the result would be grandly impressive, and would bring conviction to all beholders. It is in the expectation of such an unity of all His followers that Jesus bases His confidence of one day winning the world to Himself.



Such a result can not be secured by any energy externally applied, but by the operation of an interior, centripetal force powerful enough to make all the diverse elements of the body cohere by a common interest and affection. Men have dreamed of the political federation of civilized nations, and have fancied that by the establishment of an universal language the accomplishment of this end would be hastened. To further the adoption of the most recently invented tongue for all peoples, it is now proposed to establish a little independent state in Europe on neutral territory on the frontier between Germany, Belgium, and Holland, where the new language will be recognized officially; and from this center it is hoped ultimately to influence the nations of the earth to accept it. But the peculiarities of national institutions and customs will remain despite these well-meant efforts, and, whether by Hague Conferences or other international assemblies, the countries of the world are brought into closer relations of amity, the most that can be hoped is an agreement to keep peace among themselves and to refrain from provoking war with others. Tennyson saw a world in which

“ . . . the war drums throbbed no longer, and the battle flags  
were furled

In the parliament of man—the federation of the world.”

But that dream will never be realized until the nations of men are actuated by the single motive which religion itself alone can supply.

The problem of amalgamating the heterogenous elements of our American population illustrates the necessity of some dominant principle to unify the whole body of Christian believers. Immigration brings to our shores an immense horde of diverse peoples. These are to be mingled with millions of persons with whom they have no natural affiliation. Moreover, the entire population is distributed through many States, which must be so firmly united in interest as to compose one true nation. To bind them together requires something more than running a girdle of railroads around them or tying them up with



telegraph wires. Even the interdependence of commercial enterprises, involving the communication of all parts of our vast domain, is insufficient for this purpose. It is realized that some dominant sentiment must master all the inhabitants of this country if the perpetuity of our national institutions is to be maintained. Hence we run up an American flag before every schoolhouse and teach the children songs of patriotism, so that the waif from Europe shall sing "My country, 't is of thee," almost immediately upon touching these shores. Monuments commemorating the valor of soldiers and sailors who gave their lives for the safety of the nation are erected. Celebrations of great historical events, such as the birth of distinguished patriots or the anniversaries of notable victories in war, are held with the purpose of inculcating the sentiment of patriotism until it shall have become a passion in the breasts of the rising generation.

Socialism has suffered many failures because of the futile attempt to combine men and women of discordant tastes and affinities into one general affiliation. All artificial modes of bringing humanity into formal federation, such as those social communities which have sprung up in various parts of the world, are foredoomed to a disastrous end. It is only when brotherly love prevails as the controlling influence of a multitude of lives that any such social unity as visionaries have prophesied can be effected. Under the influence of such a motive the strong will not oppress the weak, and all will labor for the interest of each.

The Church of Christ will never attain the impressive unity for which its Founder prayed until its members are actuated by some such dominant passion as inspired the Lord Himself. Then, as a company of soldiers under one man's authority, as members of an orchestra under one leader's direction, the Church will move on to conquest under the grasp of one controlling impulse. As every drop of water in the sea is affected by the power which makes the tide, though each drop alone could accomplish almost nothing, while altogether they become irresistible; so when that union of His disciples' energy

for which Christ prayed has been effected, the influence of the Church will be triumphant.

Now, Christ's prayer will be answered. He is one with the Father, and secures what He asks. He says of His disciples that, if they abide in Him and His words abide in them, they shall ask what they will, and it shall be done unto them. The time is coming when believers will be united. They will take Christ's prayer upon their own lips as they gradually see Christ's purpose, and willingly enter into its beautiful expectation. Then they will bind themselves together to perform it, and the world will be won to Christ. If we ask what is to be the unifying principle by which this oneness of Christ's disciples shall be consummated, we shall find the answer in the words of Jesus: "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one." What is the glory which the Father gave to Christ? It is the glory of being the instrument of human salvation. Is not this the supreme glory of His human life and ministry? This glory He gives to His disciples, and this glory His disciples pass on to believers. "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." This is glory for the servant as for the Master. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God's Son so loved the world that He conferred upon His disciples the glory and obligation of seeking and saving that which was lost. These disciples so love the world that they get together into one indissoluble fellowship for the purpose of taking the world for righteousness. The spectacle of such unity can not fail to convince the world of the divine origin and intent of the mission of Jesus.

When the Japanese were engaged in taking one of the strong Russian positions about Port Arthur, they made three successive attempts before victory crowned their valor. A remarkable incident occurred in the third assault, as the Russians, still facing the enemy, retreated. A Japanese standard-bearer, holding his flag aloft, climbed the pinnacle, and fell dead clutching the colors.

In his tracks another rose with the flag, only to fall instantly with a dozen wounds in his body. Six others followed, and met the same fate. At last, when the ninth man appeared, a Russian officer exclaimed: "Don't shoot that fellow with the flag; it will be planted anyhow." The world will not resist the efforts of Christian disciples when the Church shows such a spirit of unity and determination to conquer for Christ.



When Christ's prayer is answered the world will not see such a union of His disciples as shall destroy those nominal and convenient distinctions which now characterize the various bodies of Christendom, but a substantial fellowship much more effective. Organic union is a dream impossible of fulfillment, and far from being desirable if it were possible. Rome has undertaken to secure such a union, but fragments are constantly breaking off from the central body. The unity which Jesus contemplates will not decrease, but rather increase, the number of creeds in the world, for no attempt is made by true Christianity to suffocate the individual expression of judgment concerning the gospel of Christ. But as one enriches his conception of Christ by looking successively upon the great portraits of the Master which glorify the various galleries of Europe, so he will enlarge his conception of Christ's gospel as he looks upon the many exhibitions of faith which have been given through all the ages by devout worshipers of his Lord. Nor need we look for unity of ecclesiastical polity; for each disciple is at liberty to perform his work for Christ in that way which seems best suited to his individual aptitudes. But as we experience no discomfort in listening to a company of singers by the thought that their melody is the product of a combination of many different voices, so we shall rejoice in the fact of many divisions of Christ's Church pursuing their various enterprises inspired by the single purpose to win the world to truth.

The real effect of Christian unity which the world

will see with advantage is that unbroken fellowship of love which Jesus predicted would conquer humanity. "See how these Christians love one another!" exclaimed the heathen of old. It was said of the apostolical company when they shared their possessions with one another and continued in daily fellowship, both in worship and in social intercourse, that "they had favor with all the people, and the Lord added unto the Church daily such as were being saved." So shall it be again when Christ's prayer for the oneness of His disciples shall have been fully answered.

A young sailor whose parents had expressed a deep concern for his spiritual welfare, but who had turned impatiently from all their entreaties, heard his mother's voice pleading earnestly with God for the salvation of her only son, as he lay awake upon his bed far in the night after a day of sinful indulgence. But he was exasperated, rather than melted, by the accents of his mother's voice. In a few days he hurried away to sea; but one night he was stationed as a lookout, high on the mast, with no companions near him, and only the piping winds to speak to him, when suddenly he fancied that he heard the very words of his mother's prayer uttered in the darkness, borne to his ears by the mysterious spirit of the air as he sailed on over the lonely sea. He tried in vain to drown the impression made upon his mind, but presently he became convinced that a miracle had been wrought in his behalf, and amid the shrouds he cried: "God be merciful to me, a sinner," and from that hour was a new man. He who reads the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel overhears the prayer of Jesus for His disciples and the world; and, having reverently listened to its solemn pleadings, if he be a sincere follower of Christ, feels himself impelled to go forth into the earth to help his Lord secure the object for which He prays.



## SECTION II.

# THE OUTER MANIFESTATION BY SUFFERING AND DEATH.

## CHAPTERS XVIII-XIX.

JOHN now resumes the narrative which has been interrupted by the presentation of Christ's inner teaching to His disciples. A careful study of this section reveals the fact that it is not intended as a supplement to the Synoptic story of the Lord's passion and death. While it contains some matter not found in any other Gospel, and omits much that must be read in the others in order to a full understanding of this, it is still a complete work in itself, taking for granted that its readers have an acquaintance with the facts embodied in the current oral and written narratives. Its supreme object is to interpret the deeper meaning of the events which it describes. It is written with the vividness and detail of an eye-witness, but it seeks first of all to show the spiritual significance of each incident. This is a characteristic of John's writing observable throughout his entire Gospel. As Scott says, "The import of the fact is always more valuable to him than the fact itself." "It is not so much the event in each case which interests him," says Prof. Riggs, "as it is the bearing of that event upon the revelation of the person of Christ." It will be noted by the thoughtful reader of this section that it emphasizes these facts: that the sufferings of Jesus evidence His real humanity, that they are voluntarily endured by Him, that they are a part of a providential order, that they are in fulfillment of prophecy, and that they are glorious with divine majesty. In this section we have a record of:

1. THE ARREST. (xviii, 1-11.)
2. THE ECCLESIASTICAL TRIAL. (xviii, 12-27.)
3. THE CIVIL TRIAL. (xviii, 28—xix, 16.)
4. THE DEATH AND BURIAL. (xix, 17-42.)





## XVI.

### THE ARREST.

#### CHAPTER XVIII, I-II.

All but superficial readers must perceive that in the writings and character of St. John there is from time to time a tonic and wholesome severity.—*Bishop Alexander.*

At the conclusion of His prayer Jesus led His disciples across the brook Kidron, a small stream flowing through a dark ravine, symbolizing to some minds the somber experience through which the Messiah was passing, and came to a garden on the Mount of Olives (Luke xxii, 39) named Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi, 36; Mark xiv, 32), meaning "oil press." Since the days of Constantine tradition has marked the site of this sacred place, and may have correctly indicated the scene of the agony described by the other evangelists. John does not record this event, but from the language of verse 11 we should infer his acquaintance with it. The implication in xii, 24-27, leads to the same conviction. In this passage, as Godet says, John "has preserved for us the moral essence of the scene in Gethsemane." The garden was doubtless enclosed with a wall, and provided a convenient place for withdrawal. We learn from the Synoptists that the disciples were divided into two groups. Eight were stationed near the entrance, and three, Peter, James, and John, proceeded into the depths of the olive garden. A little apart from them Jesus retired to pray. Some time elapsed between their going into the garden and the coming of Judas. Meanwhile the agony occurred. Some writers fancy a designed parallel between the garden of Eden, in which the "first man" was defeated

by sin, and the garden of Gethsemane, where the "second man" overcame the prince of this world. Perhaps the garden belonged to a friend of Jesus. In any case, "Judas knew the place, for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples." But no sacred associations would deter Him from breaking in upon the hallowed seclusion with His band of soldiers. He had sundered His relation with the holy past. The Lord had been accustomed to meet His disciples here to impart instruction to them, and perhaps during His stay at Jerusalem the last few days, as on former occasions, the spot had been used as a resting place through the night (Luke xxi, 37), and it is not impossible that Judas may have supposed that he would find Jesus and His disciples sleeping when he came to the garden. The sureness with which the traitor laid his plans shows how familiar he was with the thoughts and movements of Jesus. Edersheim suggests that the band had gone first to the upper room, and, finding it vacated, had proceeded to the garden where Judas knew Jesus was likely to be.

#### I. JUDAS AND HIS BAND. (3-9.)

Judas approached the garden accompanied by a "band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees." Two classes composed this company. There was first a portion of the Roman cohort, a detachment of soldiers from the garrison of the Castle of Antonia, which was located at the northeast angle of the temple. How large this body was it is impossible to say, since the term employed to describe it is of variable meaning. There would be no difficulty in securing these men from Pilate to repress a popular uprising at the time of the Passover. The fact that Pilate was ready at five o'clock in the morning for the trial of Jesus seems to indicate that he was informed of the plan to apprehend Jesus. This band was commanded by the Chiliarch, or chief officer, himself (12), which shows that a real crisis was anticipated. Perhaps Judas remembered the miraculous power of Jesus, and feared to attempt His arrest without a military

escort. The second portion of this band consisted of temple police sent by authority of the Sanhedrim. They were charged with the real work of arrest, and the soldiers accompanied them to assist in case of need. They were attended by some of the chief priests themselves. (Luke xxii, 52.) These preparations show the importance and studied character of the event. They came with lanterns and torches, for, though the Paschal moon was shining upon the scene, the dark recesses of the grove or some cavern or shed might enable one who desired to escape to conceal himself. Moreover, the temple watch regularly carried torches in making their rounds.

Jesus now issued from the shade of the garden and the circle of His disciples to confront the band, "knowing all things that should come upon Him" (4). He doubtless stood at the gate while His disciples were yet within the enclosure. He who had heretofore eluded His enemies now voluntarily submitted Himself to their malice, recognizing that His time had come. It is at this moment probably that the kiss of Judas, mentioned by the Synop- tists (Matt. xxvi, 48, 49; Mark xiv, 44, 45; Luke xxii, 47, 48) was proffered. Some commentators think it came later. John does not mention it, though he has been accused of personal enmity toward Judas. Then Jesus turned to the crowd and asked, "Whom seek ye?" The purpose of the question was twofold: to shield His disciples, and to make it apparent to His enemies exactly what they were doing. The naturalness of the incident is clear. In the dim light Jesus was not immediately recognized. The soldiers would not suppose that Jesus Himself would come forth, but that some friend would represent Him. When they responded, "Jesus of Nazareth," they expressed intentional contempt. The answer of Jesus, "I am He," astonishes them. They fall back. Their conduct throws light upon the escape of Jesus when His townsmen would have thrown Him over the brow of the hill at Nazareth (Luke iv, 29, 30), and also on the behavior of the temple traders when Jesus expelled them. The majesty of His words had on a former

occasion disarmed those who came to arrest Him. (vii, 46.) Judas was among those who were affected in this way (5)—a dark figure, knowing His Lord's goodness and fearing His Lord's greatness.

In consequence of the perturbation of the mob, Jesus was compelled to stir the lagging officers and men to their task. They were hanging back, and He goaded them by renewal of the question, "Whom seek ye?" Again the reply, "Jesus of Nazareth," and the Master surrenders at once, thus identifying Himself, and only stipulating that His disciples shall be permitted to escape. Two things are emphasized: He yields voluntarily; He demands the safety of His own. Herein is confirmed the description of the Good Shepherd (x, 11-15; 17, 18). He must suffer alone. This is His unique mission. They are incapable of enduring suffering now. They are reserved for that glorious part when they have been strengthened for it by a deeper realization of Christ's work and their relation to it. Had the disciples been captured by this band, apostasy might have resulted, as was the case with Peter soon afterward. Herein was also confirmed the words of Jesus in His prayer (xvii, 12), but they will have a wider spiritual fulfillment in the future.

## II. PETER AND HIS SWORD. (10-11.)

All the evangelists mention this incident. John alone gives names. From Luke xxii, 38, we learn that a couple of weapons were in the hands of the disciples. While Peter was yet living, it would not be wise to mention his name in connection with this incident, and perhaps John was the only evangelist who knew the name of the slave mutilated by Peter's sword. The healing of the servant's ear is only mentioned by Luke. It is to this act of mercy that Peter's escape from arrest, if not immediate punishment, is probably to be attributed. The whole description gives evidence that the writer was an eye-witness. Malchus had probably taken an active part in the arrest of Jesus, and perhaps he was actually

binding the Master, who had been seized by some of the more forward persons in the crowd. In the confusion of this moment occurred Peter's attack. John certainly shows no animosity toward Peter, but rather friendship, as though he would intimate that this brave though mistaken act of Peter's should be remembered when the sad story of his fall was told. The Master's rebuke (II) is full of divine compassion, and at the same time certifies the voluntariness of His sacrifice. The cup which He had prayed might pass from Him if the Father willed it so, He now would take uncomplainingly, nay, eagerly: Compare the fuller statements in Matt. xxvi, 51-54; Luke xxii, 50, 51. John alone gives the words about the cup, and the Synoptists the prayer in the garden to which they refer. The accounts are thus mutually confirmatory.

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### Deliverance Through Death.

*If, therefore, ye seek Me, let these go their way.*  
—JOHN xviii, 8.

Robert Browning expresses a great truth which is illustrated in the lives of Christ's disciples when he writes:

. . . "Somehow, no one ever plucked  
A rag even from the body of the Lord,  
To wear and mock with, but despite himself,  
He looked the greater, and was the better."

Even Judas Iscariot takes on a dignity not his own when regarded in the light of his association with Jesus, who chose him for a disciple. Every one of the followers of Christ was glorified beyond nature by fellowship with the Master, and doubtless the consciousness of this compelled them to render affectionate attention to His personal needs.

While Frederick Dennison Maurice was staying at a country house, the confidential upper servant was found by her mistress the morning after his arrival brushing a



pair of boots. When asked why she was doing this she exclaimed: "O, ma'am, I can not let any one else brush Mr. Maurice's boots while he is here. I never saw any one like him before, and there is nothing else I can do for him." Such was the devotion evoked from a simple heart by the character of a godly man. A like solicitude for the welfare of Jesus may be presumed to have existed in the minds of His disciples. There was probably no mark of regard which they would not have been glad to pay Him. In Peter especially this disposition was strong. His attempt to defend his Lord when the soldiers and temple police came to arrest Him is evidence of this. The impulsive disciple did not pause long enough to reflect how futile his assault upon Christ's foe would be, nor how disastrous it might result for himself. He whipped out his sword and lay upon the slave who was touching Christ before he had time to count the cost of his rashness. But Jesus had already shown that it was useless to depend upon the arm of flesh, and had surrendered Himself to His enemies, in fulfillment of His Father's will. Yet He had commanded the officers to grant His disciples their freedom. The picture of Jesus delivering His friends from trouble, and taking upon Himself the full stroke of the enemy's hatred, is most impressive; and His words: "If, therefore, ye seek Me, let these go their way," are very suggestive of His divine mission to the world, and characteristic of those qualities of His person which make Him the "chiefest among ten thousand and the One altogether lovely."



There is a tone of authority in these words of Jesus which correctly signalizes the power He possessed over the minds of men. When, on a former occasion, officers of the council came to apprehend Him, they found themselves incapacitated for their appointed task and could only say, in apology for their failure to seize Him: "Never man spake like this Man." There would seem to be no way to account for the ability of Jesus to drive

the defiling traffickers from the sacred precincts of the temple except to credit Him with possessing in the majesty of His person a power to compel the reverence and awe of men who were conscious of their own evil lives. Perhaps there also lies in this fact the explanation of Christ's ability to elude the grasp of His enemies before He recognized that His time of sacrifice had arrived. A notable instance of this is His escape from the toils of His enraged countrymen when, after His remarkable address in the synagogue at Nazareth, they sought to fling Him to death over a precipice. The behavior of the mob which came to arrest Him outside the garden of Gethsemane is a striking confirmation of this theory. Roman soldiers who belonged to legions which had terrified all Europe, shrank back from His presence, apparently overwhelmed with awe. Such an influence over men other godly characters have exhibited. After Mr. Wesley's famous interview with the notorious Beau Nash, the prince of social follies in his time, in which the wit of the itinerant preacher gained a decided victory over that of the fop, it is said that "as Wesley returned the street was full of people hurrying to and fro and speaking emphatic words. But when any of them asked, 'Which is he?' and he replied, 'I am he,' they were awed into silent respect." Such an effect of personal character may have nothing supernatural in it, and yet is attributable to a distinctly spiritual energy. Matthew records that Jesus said to Peter: "Thinkest thou that I can not now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" That He could have smitten His foes with physical destruction can not be denied; that He conquered them by the sublimity of His character is the teaching of this incident.

The prominent lesson of this aspect of the situation is that Jesus has power to lend to all His disciples. He says to His followers in the twentieth century, as well as to those in the first: "All power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth." His primitive apostles required His aid in all their undertakings. They doubtless recalled in future years this scene in which the authority of

their Master was so wondrously displayed, and were comforted with the reflection that, as He delivered them then, so He would do whenever the exigencies of their lives required divine assistance. In the power of His name they wrought miracles, and on the authority of His name they exercised sovereignty over the hearts of men. Relying on His name, they found acceptance with God and help from heaven in every great crisis. The same authority of Christ is now operative in the world. By it deliverance has been effected in many heathen lands, and the progress of Christian evangelization constantly confirms the faith of modern disciples in the ultimate triumph of their Master.



There was a gentle forbearance in the words of Christ: "Let these go their way." They suggest that the Lord will not permit His disciples to be tried beyond their ability to endure. These men were not prepared to undergo severe sufferings and death for Christ's sake. One of them, who found himself in narrow quarters, where prudence dictated caution, did not scruple to deny his Lord. All these disciples temporarily forsook their Master when they were overwhelmed by fear. They were not strong enough to bear such an emergency as would be thrust upon them if they must immediately undergo the persecution of the world. They were to be apostles carrying the message of salvation in many directions. For the accomplishment of their mission they required discipline and culture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When they had been sufficiently strengthened for suffering and death they would be permitted to share in the glory of Christ's sacrifice. Then they would stand forth valiantly for the truth which had been committed to them. It is the glory of the Church that in all succeeding ages Christians have been ready to lay down their lives in defense of their Lord. It is good to know that faith has produced such fruits, but now it is inspiring to know that Jesus stood for

His followers, bidding their enemies relinquish their grasp upon these men, while He assumed the burden which they were not strong enough to bear.

It was not in the divine ordination of things that Jesus should share with His disciples the responsibility of His sacrifice. His mission was unique. He was the divinely appointed Redeemer of mankind. He must tread the wine-press alone. There was no other who could accept this obligation. He drew upon Himself the envenomed shafts of iniquity. It was characteristic of His whole life that He should defend others by the sacrifice of Himself, for there is "none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." It is of humanity, trusting in His grace, that He says: "Let these go their way." On the cross He prayed for His enemies: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The world hangs for its deliverance from sin upon this utterance of Jesus Christ. Trusting in Him, men fear no ill. Martin Luther could well defy the papal bull of excommunication, while he realized that Jesus Christ alone possessed authority to save or condemn him. The man born blind to whom Jesus gave sight could well turn with scorn from his ecclesiastical tormentors, knowing that he had looked upon the face of the Son of God and received from His lips the grace of perfect absolution.



Christ's command "Let these go their way" carries our thought on to eternity. He called men to witness that not one of His disciples had been lost who really belonged to Him. The son of perdition had violently torn himself from the Lord's loving embrace, but the faithful followers could not be removed from His favor and power. The prophecy that none should be lost would be more profoundly realized in the future life. Upon the intercession of Christ they would depend for the eternal deliverance from the guilt and the penalty of sin. So John, remembering his Master's words, could say in

later years: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous;" and Charles Wesley could point to "five bleeding wounds received on Calvary," as evidence of His redemption from death. John Newton, once most violently wicked and afterwards most devoutly spiritual, records an experience through which many a soul has passed:

"I saw One hanging on a tree,  
In agonies and blood,  
Who fixed His languid eyes on me  
As near His cross I stood.

Sure never till my latest breath  
Can I forget that look;  
It seemed to charge me with His death,  
Though not a word He spoke.

My conscience felt and owned the guilt,  
And plunged me in despair;  
I saw my sins His blood had spilt,  
And helped to nail Him there.

A second look He gave which said,  
'I freely all forgive,  
This blood is for thy ransom paid;  
I die that thou mayst live.'

Thus while His death my sin displays  
In all its blackest hue,  
Such is the mystery of grace,  
It seals my pardon too."

Christ's voluntary surrender to His enemies, in behalf of His friends, is the allegory of the Good Shepherd worked out in perpetual sacrifice for humanity: "I am the Good Shepherd and know My sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd. Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I

lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father."

By the grace of that sacrifice the repentant sinner is eternally free, and can sing, with his mind on the final judgment:

"Bold shall I stand in that great day,  
For who aught to my charge shall lay?  
Fully absolved through these I am,  
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame."



## XVII.

### THE ECCLESIASTICAL TRIAL.

#### CHAPTER XVIII, 12-27.

Without this Gospel the unfathomable depth, the inaccessible height, of the character of the Savior of the world would be wanting to us, and His boundless influence, renewing all humanity, would forever remain a mystery.—*Schenkel.*

FIRST the Church, then the State: this is the order of Christ's condemnation by the world; for the world was no less represented by the Jewish ecclesiastical authorities than by Pilate and the Roman soldiers. Plummer has a very sagacious note on the apparently disproportionate space given to the two trials of Jesus in the Gospels. He says they "illustrate the two great elements of Christ's Messiahship. By the Sanhedrin He was condemned as claiming to be the *Son of God*; by Pilate, as claiming to be the *King of the Jews*. The crucifixion would be unintelligible if we did not clearly understand *who* was crucified and *why*."

John was apparently present on both occasions, and his report bears all the marks of authenticity. Some confusion exists in his narrative because he makes no attempt to distinguish the appearance of Jesus before Caiaphas, which he apparently does not describe, and the interview with Annas, which he alone records. John's account is an implied correction of the Synoptists (Matt. xxvi, 57-68; Mark xiv, 53-65; Luke xxii, 54, 63-71), from which, without his additional matter, we should suppose there was but one examination, that before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, which apparently con-

sisted of two parts, one an informal inquiry, and the other a regular trial. John sets the matter straight by informing us that there was a preliminary hearing before Annas, of which the Synoptists may have been ignorant. This event appears to be the subject of John's recital in the passage before us, though Edersheim takes a contrary view, asserting that "no account is given of what passed before Annas." Very few modern scholars agree with this opinion. It is more generally held that, when Jesus was brought before Annas, who was father-in-law to Caiaphas, and may have had apartments in the palace of the high priest, an examination was held at which Caiaphas was present and in which he participated. The object of this interview, we may assume, was to secure some evidence from the lips of Jesus Himself sufficient to make out a case against Him when He should be brought to a formal trial before the Sanhedrin. After the examination before Annas Jesus was delivered over to Caiaphas, probably in the same building, for an official inquiry in the regular form. It is at this juncture that Peter's denials begin. A graphic description is given in this passage of the way in which Christ meets the world and vanquishes it, while Peter meets the world and is conquered by it.

#### I. JESUS AND THE HIGH PRIEST. (12-24.)

When the binding of Jesus, which had been interrupted by Peter's foolhardy assault upon Malchus, had been completed, the Master was led away by the band of soldiers and temple police to the residence of Annas. The distance traversed was not great, and the tramp of feet through the night would not startle the sleeping population of a city accustomed to such occurrences. The official before whom Jesus was first taken is known to history as Annas, Hanan, Ananias, and Ananus. He was high priest A. D. 7 to 14. Five of his sons held the office of high priest in succession, and he was himself still designated by the title. (Acts iv, 6.) He was possessed of great influence. His son-in-law, Caiaphas,

was high priest at this crisis. It was he who had advised the Jewish rulers that one man should die for the people rather than the whole nation should suffer." (xi, 50.) Peter and John followed Jesus as He was being conducted to Annas. "Another disciple," who "was known to the high priest," can only refer to John. (Compare xx, 2.) Whether it is Annas or Caiaphas to whom John is here said to be known, can not be determined. It is not unreasonable to suppose that Annas still kept apartments in the official residence of the high priest, where Caiaphas resided and held his court. In this case it would not be difficult to reconcile the narrative of the Synoptists with that of John in respect of Peter's denials, which are described as occurring outside the palace of the high priest. Westcott sees no incongruity in presuming "that Annas presided at an examination in the house of Caiaphas, though he did not live there." In any case, there is nothing in the text to prove that there was a change of scene when Jesus passed from Annas to Caiaphas. John gained immediate entrance to the palace because of his acquaintance with the high priest, but Peter was kept outside the portal which opened into the court around which the official buildings were constructed. Through John's intervention he was soon brought within. When challenged to say if he were not one of Christ's disciples, a fact which John had freely acknowledged concerning himself, Peter denied his relationship to Jesus, and thus began that sad course of infidelity which marred his record more than any of his previous blunders.

The examination of Jesus at the instance of the high priest consisted of a twofold inquiry concerning His disciples and His doctrines. The ecclesiastical inquisitors were anxious to extort a confession from Him touching the number and character of His followers, and the substance of His secret teaching, which would compromise Him with the authorities. Jesus ignores the question regarding His disciples, confining Himself to the implied charge that He has been imparting dangerous sentiments privately to those who were nearest to Him.

He declares that His teaching has been given openly in the synagogues and the temple. He had given interpretations of His parables to His disciples which the untaught public was not qualified to understand; and in his final address to His own company He had enlarged upon some of His most profound teachings, but practically all that He had uttered in private had been proclaimed openly to the multitude. He had nothing to conceal. The essentials of His doctrines were the property of all who would receive them. Moreover, He had urged His disciples to disseminate His teachings everywhere. (Matt. x, 27.) Let the high priest summon the people who had heard Him. Some of them were even now on the ground. It was a palpable injustice to urge Him to incriminate Himself. Let the court establish His guilt by independent testimony, if that be possible (20, 21).

On the plea that Christ's reply to the high priest was discourteous, one of the officers standing by struck Him, and rebuked Him for answering the Churchly dignitary in such an unbecoming fashion. But Jesus appealed to the blamelessness of His teachings as a justification of His position, and called for testimony rather than violence (22, 23). Christ's conduct in this instance has sometimes been taken by commentators as an interpretation of His own precept in Matt. v, 39. Instead of the Authorized Version, it seems better to read with the Revisers. "Annas therefore sent Him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest;" that is, he formally delivered Him over for an official trial, either as having failed to secure evidence sufficient for Christ's condemnation or as feeling that a presumptive case had been made against Him. The Synoptists having already narrated what occurred before the Sanhedrin, John does not relate it.

## II. PETER AND THE SERVANTS. (25-27.)

The story of Peter's denials, which was begun at verse 18, and was discontinued in order to admit the account of Christ's examination before Annas, is now resumed. The soldiers have retired, leaving the temple

police and the servants of the high priest in charge of the illustrious Prisoner. A charcoal fire had been kindled in a brazier to relieve the cold which at that season of the year was felt at night in Jerusalem, 2,500 feet above sea level. Before it Peter stood and sat alternately, in company with others who were warming themselves. (Luke xxii, 56.) In the glow of the fire Peter's features were recognizable. After the first examination of Christ, as the disciple stood there in the court, a stranger, on whom all eyes would naturally turn, Jesus passed into the hall where Caiaphas held His tribunal. Perhaps at that moment Peter betrayed in his countenance a deep concern for Jesus, which awakened the suspicions of his companions; for they interrogated him as to his relations with the Prisoner. Again he denied that he was Christ's disciple (25). Finally a servant of the high priest, who was a kinsman of Malchus, remembering that he had seen Peter at the gate of the garden of Gethsemane, accused him of complicity with Christ. Then Peter, who was already committed to falsehood, and perhaps hoped to create a semblance of truthfulness by an emphatic re-assertion, protested that he was in no way connected with Christ. It is to be noted that John and Luke do not record the most shameful details of Peter's denials (Matt. xxvi, 70, 72, 74; Mark xiv, 71). Immediately a cock crew, and Peter recalled with keen remorse the prediction of Jesus. (xiii, 38.) This Gospel does not relate the repentance of Peter, but it does record his restoration in chapter xxi. (Compare Matt. xxvi, 69-75; Mark xiv, 66-72; Luke xxii, 54-62.)

"It has been noticed," says Plummer, "that it is 'St. Peter's friend, St. John, who seems to mention most what may lessen the fault of his brother apostle;' that servants and officers were about him; that in the second case he was pressed by more than one; and that on the last occasion a kinsman of Malchus was among his accusers, which may greatly have increased Peter's terror. Moreover, this instance of human frailty in one so exalted (an instance which the life of the great Exemplar Himself could not afford) is given us with fourfold emphasis, that none may presume and none despair."

### The Christian in a Crisis.

*"Simon Peter stood and warmed himself."*

—John xviii, 25.

TWICE within the compass of a few lines John has used this language. Evidently he attaches a moral significance to these words which he has not explained in his narrative. The scene in which they are introduced is suggestive. Jesus had been arrested at the gate of the Garden of Gethsemane and carried along by a band of Roman soldiers and Jewish temple-police to the palace of the high priest. At first all His disciples forsook Him and fled. Later John and Peter rallied from the general panic, and, while the former pressed close upon the heels of the mob with their sacred Captive, and because of his acquaintance with the high priest, was admitted to the hall of judgment, the latter followed afar off and arrived at the wicket which opened from the street into the court of the palace after it had been closed against him, and stood disconsolately without. Presently John intervenes in his behalf and brings him within. In the open court, around which the rooms of the palace were grouped, the servants had kindled a fire. Jerusalem stands at an unusual elevation. The nights are frequently cold in the early spring, at the time of the Passover, the contrast with the heat of the day making the chill of the night more perceptible. John drew as close to his Master as he could, going within the high priest's hall of inquiry, and following the judicial proceedings with deep interest; but Peter joined himself to the crowd about the fire, composed of guardsmen, servants, and such other interested parties as had been admitted when Jesus was brought to the bar of judgment. The light of the fire flared upon the faces of the loiterers, revealing the features of a man haggard and worn with sleeplessness and misery, suffering the chill languor which creeps over one when his blood is not hot enough to overcome the depression of his spirit. This abject figure was Simon Peter, who "stood and warmed himself."

The cold which he experienced was due to something



more than external conditions. Peter was suffering the reaction which followed the excitement of the conflict before the Garden of Gethsemane. His abortive sword thrust had expended much of his heat and left him depleted in nervous energy. His behavior had been most astonishing. Perhaps it was admirable in some respects, but it was very hazardous and ineffective. What a man with one sword would imagine he could accomplish against two or three hundred soldiers of the Roman garrison, accompanied by a detachment of temple-police and a mob of idlers, it is difficult to conjecture. Yet Peter's act was marked by boldness, if not by discretion; and now that the experience had passed, his despondency was as great as formerly his intrepidity had been. He was suffering such a reaction as Elijah endured after his defeat of the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel, when he begged God to permit him to die, except that in this instance the reaction followed failure and not success. The rebuke which Jesus administered to Peter had greatly cooled his ardor. He had drawn away from his Master as the procession swept on toward the high priest's palace, and in the darkness of the street he had become increasingly depressed as he reflected that Jesus was now in the hands of His enemies, and that any attempt to rescue Him would not only be rebuked by Jesus Himself, but would be unavailing in any case. The Master did not wish to be rescued, and the whole dismal business was apparently at an end. He would certainly be condemned, whether there was sufficient evidence against Him or not, and the world looked exceedingly black to the crestfallen disciple. No sympathetic heart can fail to be saddened by Peter's condition. Doubtless much can be said in his behalf, and if our purpose were to devise an apology for him, it would not be difficult to name extenuating circumstances connected with his conduct. But the warnings in his case are more useful for our present consideration.



"Simon Peter stood and warmed himself." He is a type of those Christians who adopt a policy of com-

promise with the world, thinking thus to gain some advantage for themselves. Peter mingled with the crowd around the fire, instead of associating himself closely with his Lord. He may have feared violence at the hands of the company if he should be identified as the assailant of Malchus, whose life he had imperilled. His personal safety was of the utmost importance to him now, though he honestly intended to be loyal to Jesus even to the end. But he placed himself in the wrong company. He would hear nothing in that crowd which was favorable to his Master. All the talk would be flippant and prejudicial to his Master. He would not join in this ribaldry and hostile comment upon his Lord, but his very silence would be suspicious. It would finally create the necessity of his saying something, and when the crisis came he was suddenly swept from his fidelity by fear and denied the Lord with stout asseverations.

It was a sorry plunge into sin. But a policy of dallying and compromise preceded it. He would have been far safer as an avowed and uncontaminated disciple of Christ. An unequivocal alignment with his Master would have saved him from a most painful situation. And this is the only secure position for any follower of Christ.

A Chinese convert of one of the higher social classes visited America, and was greatly puzzled by the worldliness of many Christians whom he saw in this country. He observed that it was sometimes difficult to distinguish the followers of Christ from unconverted people. He said to a friend, "When the disciples in my country leave the world they come clear out." This is the only policy which can satisfy the Lord whose name the disciples bear. Christ is represented as saying to the Laodicean Church: "Thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou were cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth."

An equivocal relation to Jesus Christ is not only offensive to Him; it is perilous to the disciple himself. Even a slack allegiance to the Lord will involve a dis-

ciple in the weal or woe of the Christian movement. He can not altogether escape detection as a member of Christ's flock even when he thinks it to his interest to have companionship with the world. He may wish to be known as a Christian when the Church is triumphant and it is a mark of honor to wear Christ's name, and he may prefer to be regarded as neutral when the Church is in jeopardy and it is a cause of derision to be accredited a follower of Christ. But such double dealing is sure to result in misfortune. The formal connection with Christ will be discovered, and instead of being praised for a wise policy of precaution, the worldly disciple will be cursed for his false attitude. This was the bitter experience of Peter. Several of the loungers about the fire recognized him. A kinsman of Malchus was there who had seen him with Christ in the garden. Peter's Galilean accent betrayed him. Accusations were hurled at him from every side. Evidence piled up against him most unaccountably. He lost his self-control. He became angry. He blustered noisily. Finally he perjured himself with a round oath as black as ever fell from human lips. But nobody believed him in spite of his fierce profanity, and all he had for his pains was the twofold fact that everybody knew that he was one of Christ's disciples, and everybody knew that he was a very recreant and craven disciple. That was the sole reward of his policy of neutrality. He was forever identified as a Christian, and forever pilloried as a cowardly Christian.

The same dreary consequences of timid and cautious discipleship are apparent to-day. The man who is identified with the Church can not make himself partner of the world when it suits his convenience without bearing the disgrace of having temporarily foresworn his religion for the sake of expediency. He will be detected as a formal disciple of Jesus, but will be compelled to endure the odium of a temporizing position in religion. He will be held just as accountable for the defeats of the Christian Church as though he were an ardent supporter, and he will be despised by the very worldlings

whom he hoped to propitiate. Meanwhile, he has hurt his Lord more terribly than his avowed enemies. He has crucified the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame. The infidelity of worldlings is as nothing to the infidelity of churchmen as an influence prejudicial to the interests of religion.



"Simon Peter stood and warmed himself." He is a type of those Christians who have more anxiety for their personal comfort than for the prosperity of Christ's cause. The night-chill doubtless affected the body of John as well as that of Peter, but he forgot the cold in the intensity of his devotion to Jesus. The Master found His environment pervaded by the cold hostility of His inquisitors. But He was serene in the glow of His sublime sacrifice. Peter was more conscious of the cold than either because his zeal had suffered a collapse. He stood and warmed himself. He must needs be made comfortable, though his Lord was being tried by men who were determined to condemn Him.

Parallels in modern discipleship are numerous and crowd quickly into our thought. We shudder at the suggestion to leave our pleasant fireside on the stormy Sunday. Though the cause of Christ will suffer by reason of his absence from the place of public worship, and his own spiritual tone will be lowered by his neglect of the means of grace, still Simon Peter stands and warms himself. *He* must be made comfortable whatever else occurs.

The prayer-meeting arrives with such amazing frequency and interferes so persistently with our social engagements that, though it is the very heart of the Church's life, and though to neglect it is a positive injury to his soul, Simon Peter stands and warms himself and will not brook any interference with his comfort.

The work of the Church calls for increased helpers. "The harvest is indeed plenteous, but the laborers are few." Out into the frigid world the loving disciples must

go to bring the wanderers in; to clothe the naked, visit the sick, bind up the broken-hearted, and save the sinning. But Simon Peter stands and warms himself. His comfort must not be impaired. Worldly interests can not be sacrificed for Christ's sake. The earthly spirit whispers to him of the satisfactions of self-interest. Ruskin says to Spurgeon, "You are a fool for devoting your time and talents to that mob of people down at Newington, when you might employ them more profitably upon the intellectual and cultured few."

A crisis comes upon the Church, when the company of Christ's disciples is assailed by skepticism and worldliness. Unsanctified learning laughs at simple faith. False religions pervert the truth through craft and cunning. Then every disciple is needed in his place, and every witness is of the greatest value. Then it is that Simon Peter stands and warms himself. It is not his fight; he will be comfortable. Luther says of Erasmus: "You desire to walk upon eggs without crushing them and among glasses without breaking them." The timid, hesitating Erasmus replies: "I will not be unfaithful to the cause of Christ—at least so far as the age will permit me." Erasmus is Simon Peter standing by the fire to warm himself. Luther is John, ready to suffer any peril for his Master's sake. Financial stringency jeopardizes the prosperity of a nation, and immediately the Church of Christ is affected, since money is requisite for the effectiveness of religious effort. For, while salvation is free, a large amount of money is necessary to carry the news of the Gospel to earth's millions and to induce them to accept and to live it; and while "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," the Lord's avowed people are managing the estate for Him temporarily, and the success of His work depends upon the willingness they show to appropriate the funds at their disposal for His advantage. Times of financial disturbance endanger the interests of benevolence and Christian enterprise. Nothing is more quickly touched than these by periods of commercial adversity. Now it is that Simon Peter stands and warms himself. Retrenchment begins

at the house of the Lord. Personal comfort must be maintained even if the cause of Christ languishes.



“Simon Peter stood and warmed himself.” He is a type of those Christians who seek support in external agencies and not in direct fellowship with the Source of Life. Peter probably fancied that he could warm his chilled blood by that fire, and then, having been made comfortable in body, he would be strengthened in purpose and become brave in defense of his Lord. For he was the kind of man who was resolute in action, but who was restive when he must await commands. Simon Peter always desired his own way. He had not learned to be teachable. He had yet to understand Christ’s view of the Messianic mission. Thus the spiritual state of Peter was such as to render him easily accessible by temptation. He had wrong conceptions of Christ’s person and work. He had never recovered from the notion of a worldly kingdom. We know that “skepticism and mental confusion on religious subjects, if not corrected or neutralized by close fellowship with Christ, or loyalty to the highest truth one knows, have sad moral results.” Such was Peter’s case. He seems not to have reflected that while Jesus refused help to deliver Himself from His enemies, He would gladly have welcomed the sympathy of His disciples. John, with deeper knowledge of his Lord’s needs, kept as near to Him as possible, and as often as Jesus wished to take His eyes away from the hard faces of His tormentors He could turn them on the countenance of His loving disciple and feel the sympathy which beamed from his eyes.

Nor does Peter seem to have reflected that, the nearer he was to his Lord and the farther he was away from that fire, the stronger would be his support, the more certain his loyalty, and the warmer his enthusiasm for the right. This is a lesson much needed in our own times. We shall not find sustenance and inspiration adequate to our needs in the slow-burning fires of world-



liness. Books are not great enough to refresh us, music can not sufficiently inspire us, the associations of life are not enough to uphold us. The Spirit of Christ alone is vital enough to impart the warmth of life which we require. The scientists are telling us that, when the coal fields are exhausted and all other sources of artificial heat have disappeared from the earth, humanity will still be able to find in the stored fires of the globe all the heat necessary for the habitations of man, or for carrying on the machinery of civilization. Already our knowledge of the processes by which deep borings can be effected have brought to our use the heat of the subterranean depths. The city of Buda-Pesth is warmed to-day by water heated far beneath the surface of the earth; and as the processes are perfected by which the central fires of the earth are more nearly accessible, our posterity will have an inexhaustible supply of heat for all the needs of the world. So shall we find Christ the indestructible source of energy and warmth for our spiritual lives. We can not reinforce ourselves through external agencies. We have the center of life in the heart of Christ. If we have, like Peter, followed our Master from afar off; if, like Peter also, we have sought to comfort ourselves at the fires of worldliness, let us know that we may still be able to stand valorously for the truth, despite every temptation, by coming close to our Master, whose promise is sure to be fulfilled—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

## XVIII.

### THE CIVIL TRIAL.

#### CHAPTER XVIII, 28—XIX, 16.

Nothing earlier than itself, nothing later, not the Synoptic history, nor the doctrine of the Church, is necessary to give the worth to this Gospel which corresponds to its place in the canon. From its rich treasury the scribe instructed unto the kingdom of God can ever take things new and old.—*Thoma.*

AS ALREADY indicated, John omits the examination of Jesus before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin at which He was officially condemned, and conducts us immediately to the Roman procurator, from whom it was necessary to obtain permission to have sentence of death executed. He just refers to the informal hearing before Caiaphas at an irregular time and place, and does not even mention the regular meeting of the Sanhedrin at daybreak. (Matt. xxvii, 1; Mark xv, 1; Luke xxii, 66-71.) This had been held evidently "to confirm the decision already made, and so to satisfy the form of law which, however, was broken by the infliction and execution of the sentence on the day of the trial."—*Westcott.* John gives many details of the examination before Pilate which are not found in the Synoptics. He followed Jesus even to the cross (xix, 26), and thus writes as an eye-witness. His account of the arraignment and sentence by Pilate explains much that would otherwise be obscure and difficult in the narratives of the other evangelists. John's description falls into seven scenes alternating between the outside and the inside of the Prætorium. These divisions are plainly marked in the text. They are comprised in three acts or sections, as follows: The First

Examination Before Pilate (xviii, 28-38); the Second Examination Before Pilate (xviii, 38—xix, 11); the Final Condemnation and Sentence by Pilate (xix, 12-16). The interval between the first and second examinations is filled by the appearance of Christ before Herod, which is recorded by Luke (xxiii, 6-12). The whole action revolves around the person of the Roman procurator, who is himself actually on trial, rather than Jesus.

### I. THE FIRST EXAMINATION BEFORE PILATE. (XVIII, 28-38.)

**Without the Prætorium (xviii, 28-32).** The blood-thirsty escort led Jesus to the "hall of judgment," the palace or prætorium of Pilate. The word originally signified the general's tent or headquarters. Here it means the Roman governor's residence, either the castle of Antonia or the palace of Herod on the western hill. It was early in the morning, probably about five o'clock, immediately after the decision of the Sanhedrin, which had met in proper session at dawn. The Jews refused to enter the prætorium, because to go into a place where leaven existed would disqualify them for eating the Passover. Therefore, Pilate, who was always ready to propitiate his Jewish subjects by yielding an external deference to their prejudices, came out to receive them and their captive. Determined to preserve the form of a judicial inquiry, the Roman procurator demanded the accusation which the Jews brought against Jesus, though he must have been aware of the arrest of the previous night and was eager to dispose of the troublesome case before the crowds began to gather as the day advanced. The Jews were no less anxious to have the matter quickly adjusted, and replied rather insolently that if Jesus were not guilty their highest ecclesiastical court would not have condemned Him. What they wish is a speedy execution of the sentence of death which they have already pronounced. (Matt. xxvi, 66; Mark xiv, 64.) Yet they simply charge Him with being an evil-doer, which was altogether vague and inconsequential. Pilate disdains to be a judge in what appears to be a religious

quarrel. If the accusers of Jesus have no specific charge which falls within the jurisdiction of a civil court, he will have nothing to do with them. Let them carry out the dictates of their own ecclesiastical tribunal. There is a covert thrust at the limitation under which they suffer, and it touches them, for they respond with something of bitterness that they have no authority to put any man to death. They were intent on crucifixion for Jesus, the most terrible punishment known to the Roman law, and thus they unconsciously fulfilled the prophecy that Christ should be lifted up. (iii, 14; xii, 32, 33.)

**Within the Prætorium (33-38).** We learn from Luke xxiii, 2, that the Jews now formulated a definite charge of which Pilate could properly take cognizance. The alleged crime of Jesus was equivalent to treason, and death was its penalty. The Roman procurator therefore began to examine Jesus within the prætorium, whither he had withdrawn. "Art thou the king of the Jews?" he asks with a half-humorous, half-pitying glance at the bound prisoner before him (33). In all the Gospels these are the first words of Pilate to Jesus. Christ demands whether he makes this inquiry out of a genuine anxiety to know the truth or simply because he is taking up the gibe of the Jews (34). But Pilate shifts the matter by exclaiming, "Am I a Jew?" How could he be expected to understand this puzzle which the countrymen of Jesus had thrust upon him? What had Christ done to incur their enmity and to impel them to place His life in the hands of the civil authority (35)? Jesus assures the procurator that he has nothing to fear from a kingdom which is not of this world. This should be evident from the fact that Christ's adherents have not taken up arms in His defense. The sovereignty He asserts is not of an earthly character (36). "So Thou art a King!" replies Pilate; and Jesus solemnly affirms that Pilate has truly pronounced His title, but does not understand its meaning. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." Here Christ's pre-existence and His

pre-determined mission are affirmed. (ix, 39; x, 36; xi, 27; xvi, 28.) So John the Baptist's witness had been to truth (v, 33). But Christ's witness is that of one who is King in the realm of truth. All who are of the truth recognize His sovereignty and heed His words. (vii, 17; xviii, 37; I John iv, 19.) Compare x, 16. Pilate, the practical man of affairs, has no patience with this rejoinder and no sympathy with the Dreamer who makes it. His question, "What is truth?" is not serious and it is not jesting. Nor is he a deep thinker baffled by a problem he has vainly attempted to solve. He is simply weary of anything so visionary as the quest for truth.

Here we must insert the trial before Herod Antipas, who had come from Tiberias on account of the feast, and who was eager to secure personal popularity. (Luke xxiii, 6-12.)

## II. SECOND EXAMINATION BEFORE PILATE.

(XVIII, 38—XIX, 11.)

Nothing had resulted from the trial before Herod except to confirm the impression of innocency which Jesus had already made. Pilate and Herod Antipas ended their deadly hatred for one another by a common hostility to Jesus. (Luke xxiii, 12.) Pilate summoned the chief priests and rulers together with the people, and began the second examination of Jesus.

**Without the Prætorium (xviii, 38-40).** Pilate informs the multitude that he finds no ground for the condemnation of Jesus on the charge brought against Him. He is not guilty of any crime worthy of death. (Matt. xxvii, 37; Mark xv, 26; Acts xiii, 28; xxviii, 18.) Herod has declared the same. Thus both before and after the trial of Herod, Pilate had pronounced Jesus innocent. The custom of releasing a prisoner at the feast, now mentioned by Pilate, is known to us only through this allusion, which is recorded in all the Gospels. Pilate appears to be anxious to deliver Jesus. But his reference to Him as the King of the Jews is calculated to arouse the anger of the authorities. They instigate

the crowd to clamor against Pilate's proposed clemency. They shout for Barabbas, the robber. Their inconsistency is shown by the fact that the man for whose release they call was an insurrectionist who had probably been guilty of murder. Thus they were eager to exonerate one who was guilty of the very political crime for which they falsely desired the death of Jesus.

**Within the Prætorium (xix, 1-3).** Pilate now takes Jesus within and has Him scourged. He has found nothing in Him worthy of death, but he will attempt to appease the wrath of His enemies by a taste of cruelty which may satisfy their evil passion. Though usually an accompaniment of crucifixion, scourging will now be employed to avert that penalty. (Luke xxiii. 14-16.) It was an exceedingly severe ordeal, sometimes attended with death. It was followed now by the mockery of crowning Jesus with thorns and robing Him in a purple garment of royalty. He was acclaimed King of the Jews in ribald scorn and smitten by His tormentors.

**Without the Prætorium (xix, 4-7).** On the former occasion, when Pilate had pronounced Jesus innocent, he had left Him inside while he himself went out to the people (xviii, 38). Now he brings Jesus out, apparently for the purpose of moving the hearts of His enemies with the sight of His suffering and shame. He points to the figure of the Lord and says, "Behold the Man!" But the chief priests and officers are only moved to deeper anger, and cry, "Crucify Him!" Then Pilate, who sees how futile are his efforts, bids them take Christ away and wreak their vengeance upon Him. The Roman governor knows full well they dare not do this without his authority, and there is a taunt in his words. But the Jews remind him that, while they have no authority to execute a capital sentence, yet, according to their law, Jesus is worthy of death, having blasphemed by calling Himself the Son of God. This is the charge which has been proven against Him by their highest ecclesiastical council. (Matt. xxvi, 63-66; Luke xxii, 70, 71.) Thus far before Pilate they had been satisfied with calling Jesus a political criminal.



**Within the Prætorium (xix, 8-11).** By the words of the Jews, Pilate's attention was arrested. He had already experienced a measure of awe in the presence of Christ's wonderful patience and meekness. (Matt. xxvii, 54.) The message of his wife, bidding him have no further dealings with this strange man, had increased the perturbation in his superstitious soul. (Matt. xxvii, 19.) He therefore asked, "Whence art Thou?" He knew Jesus came out of Galilee, and for this reason had sent Him to Herod. This also gives some presumption to the accusation of political disturbance which had been lodged against Him. But the charge had fallen through for lack of sufficient evidence. Jesus receives Pilate's question with silence, such as He had given Herod. Pilate bore no relation to anything except the specific charge before him. He had it in his power to acquit Jesus. The origin of Christ was not a matter he could understand. When the procurator resents Christ's silence and reminds Him that he has power to crucify Him, Jesus protests that Pilate has no power save that which comes from above, and that as the minister of the law the person involved in delivering Christ to him is guiltier than he is. This refers, of course, to Caiaphas (xviii, 35), who is using Pilate as his tool.

### III. THE FINAL SENTENCE. (XIX. 12-16.)

**Without the Prætorium.** Pilate from that moment continued his efforts to release Jesus, but all to no avail. By his hesitation to condemn Jesus in contrast with the persistency of the Jews in urging His death, John shows the bitterness of the rulers. They now hurl at Pilate a word of intimidation. They know that his temporary sympathy for Jesus can be displaced by the emotion of fear. They charge him with not being Cæsar's friend, if he shows any clemency for this man who has arrogated to himself the title of king. This determines the timorous Pilate, who brings Jesus forth, sits upon the judgment seat, and pronounces His doom. "Behold your King!" he cries with anger and bitterness, while they shout, "We have no king but Cæsar," thus repudiating

Jesus both as Messiah and Son of God. The die was cast. Pilate had tried to avoid sentencing Jesus by seeking to have the Jews deal with Him alone, by sending Him to Herod, by releasing Him at the feast, and by scourging Him and then freeing Him. None of these expedients was successful. Nothing remained for the man of policy, afraid of political complications which might unseat him, but to deliver Jesus into the hands of His murderers. Though Pilate washed his hands with a show of innocence (Matt. xxvii, 24), he was guilty of the unjust death of Jesus.

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### The Sovereign of Truth.

*To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice. Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth?—*JOHN xviii, 37, 38.

What a sublime objective for life! In comparison with it, how paltry are ordinary ambitions, like making money, securing fame, acquiring honor! How utterly unsatisfactory these would be to our immortal spirits, if we did not remember that in the very process of making money, securing fame, and acquiring honor, it is possible also to be witnesses to the truth. And this should be the supreme desire to which every venture of a worthy life should bear willing tribute.

Gibbon tells us: "The conquest and monarchy of the world was the first object of the ambition of Timour. To live in the memory and esteem of future ages was the second wish of his magnanimous spirit." Other conquerors have been animated by similar desires, in which self-interest is evidently the first consideration, though it must be confessed that the masters of the world have not always secured the esteem of mankind. Jesus proposed to become an universal sovereign; but in securing this position He would also secure the love of universal

humanity; for in attaining His sovereignty He would benefit all men. In the accomplishment of this object He was dominated by the purpose to bear witness to the truth. It was in the realm of truth that He would be supreme. In this first object of His ambition there was no self-interest. He sought only the welfare of men and the glory of God.

It is written on the tomb of Sir Christopher Wren, the great architect, that "he lived more than ninety years, not for himself, but for the public good." So Christ declares that His human life had no other purpose than to benefit not Himself, but the whole world. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." This striking sentence conveys a clear exposition of the sublime ministry of Jesus. This is the whole fact about His advent among men. And there is no better thing to be done than that, nor anything which men more need or wish than that truth should have unimpeachable testimony. "Man is everywhere the born enemy of lies," said Thomas Carlyle. Novalis declared: "Man consists in truth. If he exposes truth, he exposes himself; if he betrays truth, he betrays himself." These are startling assertions. They will not appear to be universally true; yet they are essentially so, for men are certainly everywhere eager for truth. They have died seeking for it, and they have perished in defense of it when they have found it.

Jesus announces to Pilate that the explanation of His coming into the world is set forth in the fact that He would thus make manifest the truth. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." This assertion throws us back to a point before His advent, and introduces us to counsels of eternity. At the same time it distinguishes Jesus from all other good men. It places Him on a pinnacle attained by no other. He alone was born into this world for the exclusive reason that He was to certify the truth. Other men have become witnesses to the truth, but no other man has ever dared to affirm that this was the sole purpose of His appearance in the

world. Other men, after having attained lofty positions as teachers, have finally consecrated themselves to the service of truth, but they could not say that this was the recognized design of their birth, fixed before they came into the world. It is a sublime thing to feel one's self sanctified to the one purpose of testifying to the truth. How it dignifies any man to adhere inflexibly to the truth! How it magnifies the stature of a scientist to follow scrupulously the results of his investigations, no matter where they may lead him! Keppler, abandoning one theory after another when he saw that his hypotheses were discredited by the discoveries of other scientists, and frankly acknowledging that men working in the same field had found the truth more precisely than himself, is a truly great figure. He alone is worthy to be a preacher of righteousness who is willing to keep the truth which God makes clear to his conscience, however widely it may take him from traditional standards. Coleridge says: "He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth will proceed by loving his own sect or Church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all." The poet, the artist, the musician, the philosopher, are great in their several fields in proportion to their fidelity to truth. Each will say that in his way he is earnestly attempting to bear faithful witness to reality. But while all may believe themselves to be reliable witnesses, not one of them will declare that it was determined in advance of his advent among men that he should come into the world for this sole purpose. Jesus affirms that before He was born this cause operated to send Him here. He comes from the invisible world to bear witness to truth. The very claim of such a mission creates a presumption that He is something more than man.

Now, it is a perilous thing to bear unvarying witness to the truth; for while men do unquestionably desire the truth, they usually want it mixed with plausible error. This is especially apparent regarding moral truth. A little mingling of flattery with truth makes it more palatable, and when it is not so diluted, testimony is likely

to be followed by persecution. Martyrs are those who have been unwilling to deviate from their precise convictions, and Jesus is the supreme example of these. Moreover, there are always in the world those who are not of the truth and those who will oppose the speaker of truth. Jesus gave this as the reason why many men refused to accept Him. But when the truth-teller is harried to death because men who are not of the truth hate him, truth actually wins a victory; for thoughtful persons say, "There must have been some truth here, or there would have been no such sacrifice." People do not die for falsehoods, at least for that which they know to be untrue. The shibboleths they speak may be false, but they carry truth to the consciousness of those who have pronounced them, and they who are willing to die for their convictions are certainly true to themselves. Jesus died to prove His loyalty to what He conceived to be truth, and His sacrifice is more convincing than His words.



"What is truth?" This question we ask in a more serious manner than Pilate adopted. Truth is absolute reality. Philosophically, it is an exact correspondence between things as they are and our thought concerning those things. When one conceives of anything as it actually is, he has the truth of that matter. Much discussion is now rife concerning Mars. Are those regular markings on the surface of the planet evidences of the workmanship of intelligent creatures? and are we, therefore, to conclude that this world is inhabited by beings resembling ourselves? The question is yet unsolved, but when the judgment of men shall correspond with the exact facts respecting that interesting planet, then we shall have perfect truth concerning Mars. If in the same way our thought about everything presented to the mind could correspond perfectly with the facts as they actually exist, we should have ultimate truth about them. It is very apparent that, as we have finite minds incapable of poring into the utmost depths of things, we can have

only partial truth. God alone possesses absolute truth. What He thinks of anything corresponds exactly with the fact of that thing. Truth, therefore, is what God thinks. If we can get His thought, we attain truth. Now, it is Christ's mission in the world to reveal the substance of God's thinking, and hence to communicate to us absolute truth, particularly those categories of truth which concern man's moral and eternal welfare. He gives an illustration of His function as witness to truth in what He reveals to us concerning the future life. All men desire to know what is beyond the present state. Jesus says: "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you." This candor of Christ touching the future life is characteristic of His entire mission as revealer of God's mind to men, and it is only by such a revelation that the divine truth can be known. We can not find out God by searching. The deeper knowledge of the infinite reality must be the subject of divine disclosure. The limits of human intelligence are so strait that out of personal experience many have felt sympathy with the song of the cobbler of Hagenau:

"Our ingress into the world  
Was naked and bare;  
Our progress through the world  
Is trouble and care;  
Our egress from the world  
Will be nobody knows where.  
But if we do well here,  
We shall do well there;  
And I could tell you no more,  
Should I preach a whole year."

The commonplaces of morality we might be able to obtain for ourselves; but the larger truths about human destiny we can only learn through a direct utterance from God Himself. The office which Jesus emphasizes when He says He has come to bear witness to the truth, is that of a spokesman for God. What Christ offers is the truth, because He utters the thought of God, and that truth He has promised shall liberate humanity from



bondage. Men are to be emancipated from the chains of intellectual and moral thralldom by the truth of God as communicated through the lips of Christ. He said: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

But Christ is not only the truth-teller; He is Truth in Himself. He says: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." In Him is the objective reality of truth. He is the Truth about God. He says to Philip: "If ye had known Me ye should have known My Father also." In Him we see that God is not an abstraction, but a personal being. He is not merely a stern judge and vindicator of moral order, but a Father, loving, keeping, and caring for His children. He is not destroying men, but saving them, and all His administration of human affairs is dominated by the element of love.

Christ is the truth about man as well as the truth about God. He exhibits in Himself what a man ought to be, and what man can be. He shows what is the destiny of man—what heights of glory He can attain. The true man is not that broken and dishonored creature of God who reels through life smirched with sin, to fall at length into eternal degradation. The true man is like the Man of Nazareth.

Christ is also the truth concerning the fellowship between God and man, as He is the way to that sacred communion. In His complete consecration to God we see a picture of the possibilities of human life. No books of ethics, no rules of conduct, no guides to behavior, can teach us the manner of this fellowship. Christ makes it evident in His own character. Man is constructed for comradeship with God, and if he fails of this dignity he misses the exalted position for which he was created. Hence the Christian insists that Christ is always the measure of truth.

When the Caliph Omar fell upon the Alexandrian library, he said: "What is the good of all these books? They are either in accordance with the Koran or they are contrary to it. If they agree with the Koran, they are unnecessary; if they disagree with it they are per-

icious. In either case let them be burned." That was an evidence of lamentable bigotry; but the Christian's view of Christ's words is equally exclusive, though not equally narrow. He would have us test religious systems, Churches, spiritual ideals, by Christ only. He is the Truth, and nothing is true which does not conform to His teaching. Let everything be discarded which can not harmonize with Him. He says: "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." That is, all true souls recognize Him as the truth, and follow and obey Him. If there are people outside the Church who follow Christ, they are of the truth; and if there are people inside the Churches who do not follow Christ, they are not of the truth. It is a simple test for all intelligences:



It is nothing to us that Christ came into the world to bear witness to the truth—nothing that He is in Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life, if we do not heed His witness and appropriate His truth. Pilate turns away from Christ's response to his question with petulant disdain. He has no interest in a kingdom of truth, for His mind is occupied with a world of compromise and diplomacy. The visionary claimant for spiritual supremacy on the ground that He is sovereign in the realm of truth whom Pilate sees in the doomed Man before him evokes his pity, but not his confidence. What has he to do with such an impractical dreamer? Society is full of Pilates, who juggle with the most serious questions, and then thrust them aside as having no place in the scheme of a material existence. Policy, commercial interest, social advantage, worldly emoluments—these are of uppermost importance in their view, and they will not listen to the Truth when He comes to them with revelations about the profoundest subjects of human inquiry. For such minds Christ is shut out by clouds of worldliness.

Alfred Russell Wallace describes the results which followed the eruption of Krakatoa, near Java. He says:

"The volcanic debris was shot up from the crater many miles high, and the heavier portion of it fell upon the sea for several hundred miles around, and was found to be mainly composed of very thin flakes of volcanic glass. Much of this was, of course, ground to impalpable dust by the violence of the discharge, and was carried up to a height of many miles. Here it was caught by the return current of air continually flowing northward and southward above the equatorial zone; and as these currents reach the temperate zone, where the surface rotation of the earth is less rapid, they continually flow eastward, and the fine dust was thus carried at a great altitude completely round the earth. Its effects were traced some months after the eruption in the appearance of brilliant sunset glows of an exceptional character, often flushing with crimson the whole western half of the visible sky. These glows continued in diminishing splendor for about three years. They were seen all over the temperate zone, and it was calculated that, before they finally disappeared, some of the fine dust must have traveled three times round the globe."

The atmosphere of our world is pervaded with influences which produce an artificial glamour and invest earthly scenes with an abnormal glory. The result is agreeable enough in itself, but when it obscures the face of Christ, and hinders human thought from recognizing the Truth, it is to be regarded as a fatal interference with the highest interests of life. The soul needs to look away from every competitive attraction to Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, in order to realize the beauty of holiness and the satisfaction of absolute reality.

## XIX.

### THE DEATH AND BURIAL.

#### CHAPTER XIX, 17-42.

In comparing the narrative of St. John with the parallel narratives of the Synoptists, it must be observed generally that . . . St. John fixes the attention of the reader upon the ideas which the several events bring out and illustrate. . . . The objective fact is a "sign" of something which lies deeper.—*Westcott*.

JOHN's account of the death and burial of Jesus embraces much which is not recorded by the Synoptists. The protest of the chief priests against the title which Pilate had caused to be placed on the cross above the head of Jesus (20-22); the bequest of Christ's mother to the care of John (25-27); the utterances, "I thirst" and "It is finished" (28-30); the piercing of Christ's side with the spear (31-37); the sacred attentions of Nicodemus (39); are all peculiar to the Fourth Gospel. It will be well to compare the other narratives with this. John was certainly an eye-witness of the scenes depicted for at least a large part of the time (26, 35). He makes much of the fulfillment of Old Testament types and prophecies (24, 28, 36, 37), and seems to emphasize the office of Jesus as the true Paschal Lamb who is being sacrificed for the world. We have here (1) The Crucifixion, (2) Two Groups of Onlookers, (3) Christ's Final Words, (4) The Prophecies Fulfilled, (5) The Burial.

#### I. THE CRUCIFIXION. (17-22.)

Pilate, having delivered Jesus into the hands of His enemies to be crucified, the Jewish authorities led Him away to the place of execution, which, according to the

customs of both Jews and Romans, was outside the city, though not far distant (20). Compare Heb. xiii, 12. The Lord was compelled to bear His own cross, as was usual with condemned men; but from the Synoptists we learn that Simon of Cyrene was pressed into the service of carrying it for Him when, perhaps, He had sunk beneath His burden. (Matt. xxvii, 32; Mark xv, 21; Luke xxiii, 26.) The crowd accompanied the guard detailed to perform the execution to a place called "the Skull," from its peculiar shape (in Hebrew, "Golgotha"), the site of which has not yet been definitely located, though it is generally identified with a small hill not far from the Damascus gate and close to Jeremiah's grotto. Here the crucifixion occurred. Probably the body of Jesus was first attached to a cross lying on the ground, the instrument of torture being then lifted and placed in a socket prepared for it. Sometimes, however, the cross was first erected and then the body of the doomed man was fastened to it with nails and ropes. The horrors of the punishment were indescribable. Fever and insanity often attended the slow death which ensued. An attempt was made to retard death by giving the body a certain measure of support. This served to prolong the agony of the sufferer. In order to identify Jesus with criminals, he was placed between two other victims, called "robbers" by Matthew and Mark, and "malefactors" by Luke. Christ's central position may have been intended to mark His supremacy in shame. "Even in suffering Christ appears as a King."—*Westcott*.

A title, called by Mark (xv, 26) "the superscription of his accusation," had been affixed to the cross of Christ by Pilate's order. Usually when a criminal was led out to death, "a board whitened with gypsum and containing a statement of his crime was carried either by the criminal himself or before him on the way to the execution," which was later nailed to the cross. The inscription which Pilate employed to wound the pride of the Jews (19), and which was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, in order that all might read it, awakened the resentment of the chief priests, who endeavored to

persuade the Roman governor to alter it so that it should affirm that Jesus said, "I am the King of the Jews," but Pilate was obdurate and replied, "What I have written, I have written" (20-22).

## II. THE GROUPS OF ONLOOKERS. (23-27.)

The enemies and friends of Jesus were both represented at His execution. The former were indicated by the soldiers who had been detailed to carry out the execution. These people felt no personal animosity toward Jesus, but were the willing instruments of His enemies. Four men were enough for this tragic business since the danger of a popular uprising (xviii, 3) had now passed. To these soldiers custom apportioned the clothes of the victim, which they proceeded to divide into four equal portions. John describes in detail what the other evangelists give in general terms (Matt. xxvii, 35; Mark xv, 24; Luke xxiii, 34), for he had earnestly watched the movements of the soldiers. When they reached "the close-fitting inner tunic or vest," which was seamless and woven in one piece from top to bottom, like that of the high priest, they paused a moment, for it could not be divided without being ruined. By their determination to cast lots for it they fulfilled the prophecy which John quotes (Psa. xxii, 18) almost verbatim from the Septuagint.

If thoughtless selfishness characterized the conduct of the soldiers, attentive love marked the bearing of the other group which stood about the cross, comprising four ministering women and the beloved disciple who made this record. The contrast is very impressive. The gentleness of the women—Mary, the mother of Jesus; Salome, the mother of John; Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene—makes an effective foil to the rudeness of the soldiers. Jesus turns His gaze down from the cross to the faces of His weeping friends, and looking with deep affection toward His mother, who is probably being supported by John, whom we suppose to be her nephew, He says, "Woman, behold thy Son;"



and, turning to John, He says, "Behold thy mother." As Westcott declares: "Special earthly relationships are now at an end. For Christ the title of parentage is exchanged for the common title of respect." From that hour, it is said, John took the Virgin to his home. If he led her away at once, we can understand why two of Christ's final utterances, given by the Synoptists, are omitted in this Gospel (Matt. xxvii, 46; Mark xv, 34; Luke xxiii, 43). It is apparent that if the beloved disciple did depart immediately with Mary, he returned to the cross after having safely placed our Lord's mother in his home (verse 35). This incident is found in this Gospel alone. From Mark i, 20, and John xviii, 15, we infer that he was in a position to care for the Virgin without difficulty. The only later reference to her is in Acts i, 14. It is Mary who is committed to John, and not John to Mary—a fact which the Romanists ignore.

### III. THE LAST WORDS. (28-30.)

The two utterances which John here records are not found in the other Gospels. On the other hand, the Synoptists contain words of Christ preceding His death which are not given in this Gospel. John also omits all reference to the three hours' darkness (Matt. xxvii, 45; Mark xv, 33), perhaps because his thought is concentrated upon the words and actions of Christ Himself. In accordance with his purpose to show the fulfillment of prophecy in the events of his narrative, John now calls attention to the exclamation of Jesus in the midst of His burning torture, "I thirst." These words of our Lord follow upon His knowledge that all is accomplished. He is filling up the whole measure of suffering predicted of the Messiah. (Psa. lxxix, 21.) Near the cross was a vessel of sour wine, such as common workmen and soldiers drank, and such as was provided for persons undergoing crucifixion, whose lives were sometimes prolonged a day or two on the cross. The soldiers had previously offered some of this to Jesus in a spirit of mockery (Luke xxiii, 36), but they seem now to have

been inspired by compassion. A sponge was filled with this liquor and it was extended to the lips of Jesus at the end of a stalk of hyssop. He had refused a stupefying mixture formerly offered Him (Matt. xxvii, 34, 48; Mark xv, 23), but He gratefully receives this innocent relief to His thirst, and cries, "It is finished," at the same time bowing His head and yielding His Spirit to God. He makes this utterance with the consciousness of triumph (xvi, 33); He has made a voluntary surrender of His life and accomplished all that He was given to do and to suffer.

What are known as the "seven words from the cross" are found in the Gospels as follows:

1. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke xxiii, 34.
2. "Verily I say unto thee, To-day thou shalt be with Me in paradise." Luke xxiii, 43.
3. "Woman, behold thy Son! . . . Behold thy mother." John xix, 26, 27.
4. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Matt. xxvii, 46; Mark xv, 34.
5. "I thirst." John xix, 28.
6. "It is finished." John xix, 30.
7. "Father, into Thy hands I commit My Spirit." Luke xxiii, 46.

#### IV. PROPHECIES FULFILLED. (31-37.)

While the Jews were not scrupulous about judicial murder, they were punctilious in observing the ceremonies of their religion. It was the Roman habit to leave the bodies of the crucified to decay upon the cross or to be consumed by birds and beasts. This practice could not be fulfilled in the present instance without violating the Jewish injunction against polluting the land by leaving a dead body unburied before sunset. (Deut. xxi, 22, 23.) Moreover, the afternoon of the day of preparation for the Passover, which occurred this year on the Sabbath, was fast hurrying to a close. That "high-day" would begin at six o'clock in the evening. It was, therefore, extremely important that Christ's

languishing life should be finished as soon as possible and that He should be removed from the cross to a place of interment. In order to hasten death and also to guard against rescue in case the victim of crucifixion still survived, it was customary to break his legs by the use of a heavy mallet. On the request of the Jews, Pilate had given orders that the three persons now being crucified should be despatched in this manner. When this had been done in the case of Christ's unfortunate associates on the cross, it was found to be unnecessary with Him for He was already dead. But, to make sure that life was extinct, one of the soldiers thrust his spear deeply into the side of Jesus, and from the wound blood and water immediately gushed forth. The Master was dead beyond a doubt. His heart was broken; His sufferings were at an end; His cup was full.

To the fact of this death John bears the most emphatic testimony. He stakes his reputation for veracity on the reliability of his witness. This was no deathlike swoon, but the veritable ending of physical life. The breaking of the legs was unnecessary. The spear-thrust showed plainly what had already taken place. Two confirmations of prophecy were thus given, and the beloved disciple is eager to have this fact understood. "A bone of Him shall not be broken" (Exod. xii, 46); "They shall look on Him whom they pierced" (Zech. xii, 10). The whole world was representatively present here.

#### V. THE BURIAL. (38-42.)

Contrasted with the hostile request of the Jews is the friendly petition of Joseph of Arimathea. Pilate was surprised that Jesus had expired so quickly (Mark xv, 44), but when he was convinced of the fact he gave permission to have the body removed. At the moment when unbelief had apparently triumphed through the cruelty of Christ's enemies, faith manifested itself from an unexpected quarter. Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, through fear of the Jews; and Nicodemus, who had interviewed Jesus by night

because he was a cautious man, now appeared openly as the friends of the crucified Master. They were both members of the Sanhedrin; one of them, at least, was rich, and one of them was an influential leader. Both belonged to the aristocracy. These men now unite in gracious and loving attentions to the body of Jesus, which is embalmed and placed in the new, hitherto unoccupied, tomb of Joseph in the garden hard by the place of crucifixion, there to await the resurrection dawn.

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### The Sign of the Cross.

*"They shall look on Him whom they pierced."*

—John xix, 37.

WHEN Lavater requested Herder to write the life of Jesus, the gifted German thinker exclaimed: "I write the life of Jesus? Never. The evangelists have done it as alone it can and ought to be written." With this sentiment all devout Christians will agree, but many will overlook a peculiarity of the Gospel narratives which is profoundly significant. Each of these writers has given what might appear to be a disproportionate space to the sufferings and death of Jesus. Each omits something which the others have retained, and each retains something which the others have omitted, but all have described the last hours of Jesus with great fullness of detail. John employs nearly one-third of his entire Gospel in depicting the circumstances of Christ's final sufferings and death. This is not according to the habit of modern writers of biography, who usually devote few words to the actual death of the persons whom they are celebrating, though they may give an elaborate summary of character at the conclusion of their work. The writers of the Gospels certainly had no precedent in the Old Testament Scriptures, where the death of Moses, Aaron, David, and other great figures is recorded with impressive brevity. When we turn to the Epistles we find their authors placing great emphasis on the death of

Jesus Christ. The inference is that they find something unique in that death, and this is confirmed by the emphasis they place upon the peculiar relation of that death to the destiny of mankind. Their estimate of Christ's death is justified by the significance which Christ Himself attached to it. Jesus is sometimes called a martyr. It is said that He was murdered to satisfy political expediency. As Julius Cæsar was assassinated ostensibly in the interests of Roman liberty; as Louis XVI was guillotined by the French in behalf of those political ideals which the Revolution is said to have established; as Charles I was beheaded by the English because he was considered embarrassing to the constitutional rights of Great Britain, so it is said that Jesus was crucified by the Jews on the ground that He was a dangerous person to the political leaders of His day. Some color is given to this theory by the fact that His accusers affirm before Pilate, "We found this fellow perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." It is also contended that Jesus was a martyr to ecclesiastical jealousy. As both Romanists and Protestants under cover of heresy-hunting have murdered thousands of innocent religionists, so Jesus was hounded to death under the false charge of blasphemy. Deeper reason for His martyrdom is sometimes found in the fact that the world's hostility to truth, which Christ came into the world to express, occasioned the murder of One whose devotion to righteousness provoked the bitterest hatred of evil-minded men.

While each of these theories has a certain measure of support, Jesus Himself introduces a totally different reason for His death when He calls attention to the fact that He voluntarily lays down His life for a spiritual purpose. He yields to the cruel assaults of His enemies in order to fulfill His Father's will. When He was arrested He declared that legions of angels were at His disposal, by whose aid He could deliver Himself from His enemies if He desired. There was never a time in His life when He could not have escaped the clutches of His foes, and frequently He did elude His tormentors,

realizing that His time had not yet come; but when the crisis was duly arrived He voluntarily surrendered Himself to His fate. In His allegory of the Good Shepherd, He shows that His position is not like that of an ordinary shepherd, who might lose his life in consequence of his fight with wolves or robbers. "I lay down My life for the sheep . . . no man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." He said concerning His mission, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." In the institution of the Lord's Supper, He said, "This is My blood in the new covenant, which is shed for you for the remission of sins." These and many other words of Jesus indicate plainly that He attached a profound significance to the fact of His physical death. The apostolic writings contain affirmations of the same significance. "He was delivered for our offenses." "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." Such words are but the reflection of the prophecy, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Where did the apostles obtain this conception of Christ's sufferings and death? They were too ordinary men to invent it. They must have secured it from the teachings of Jesus Himself. Let us hold to the fact of the unique significance attaching to the death of Christ, and refuse to be drawn aside from it by any philosophy of the atonement which men may devise. This is our method with other subjects of inquiry. We take the facts of history and accept their plain implications, allowing men of profound intellects to make such a philosophy of history as may please them. We take the facts of science and adjust our lives to the truth we have secured, allowing thinkers to make such interpretations of truth as seem good to them. In neither case do we allow ourselves to be confused by any man's theories to such an



extent as shall rob us of the benefits of facts discovered. Let us pursue the same method with regard to the death of Jesus Christ. He taught that His death bore a unique relation to the redemption of mankind. His apostles were the proclaimers of this fact, and constantly laid emphasis upon it. If we can not explain the whole mystery of the necessity which laid death upon our Lord, we can find truth enough for our salvation in the clear interpretation which Christ Himself made of His sufferings and death.



Brian the Hermit, in Scott's "Lady of the Lake," fashions a rude cross, the points of which he burns in the flame and quenches in the blood of a goat which he has slain, to be used as the instrument of rallying the Scottish clansmen to the standard of Roderick Dhu. Impatiently it is thrust into the hands of a huntsman, who is bidden by his chieftain to fly with it like the wind to summon the partisans of Roderick Dhu to Lanrick Mead, the place of muster. At sight of this cross men were to follow him, no matter what might be their occupation. On over hill and dale and rocky glen, through the wilderness and the crowded spaces alike, the herald goes, calling men to arms, who follow him with eager haste. The messenger breaks in upon the lamentations of a funeral and holds aloft his fiery, blood-quenched cross. Immediately the son leaves his widowed mother and joins the armed band. A bridal procession is leaving a church, all happy and light-hearted. The cross is upheld, and the husband deserts his bride at the altar. Thus scores of partisans are roused to arms,

"From the gray sire, whose trembling hand  
Could hardly buckle on his brand,  
To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow  
Were yet scarce terror to the crow,  
Each valley, each sequestered glen,  
Mustered its little horde of men."

Jesus said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted

up." And again, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." His cross is held before the world, not for the purpose of summoning men to arms, but to arrest their attention and direct it to the sinfulness of humanity, that men may be induced to see the heinousness of their sin and to turn from it. However willing Christ may be to save humanity, His work is futile until men are brought into a moral state which impels them to seek salvation. Salvation is not mere rescue of persons indifferent to their estate, as when a child is snatched against his will from the brink of an abyss around which he is playing in momentary but unconscious peril, or when a man far gone in the stupor of a deadly drug is aroused by violence against his sleepy wish and rubbed, beaten, and exercised back to life. Salvation is no arbitrary performance of a Savior; it is an act of co-operation between Him who would save and him who desires salvation. Men are saved because they long to be saved, and because there is a Savior who is eager to satisfy their longing; but before men will seek salvation they must be convinced that they require it. The cross of Christ serves this important office by attracting the attention of a world so preoccupied with its selfish interests as frequently to forget the fact of sin, and thus to ignore the most tragic item in the history of the universe.

When the eyes of men have been drawn to that cross, their minds begin to inquire for the reason of its existence. How does it happen that when the purest man of history came to the world, the world killed Him? Must there not be in human hearts a deadly evil to make such a result possible? Plato recognized the presence of such a baneful influence in the lives of men. Having described the righteous man as one who, without being guilty of any injustice, yet has the appearance of the greatest injustice, though he establishes his own justice by persevering unto death against all calumny, he declares that should such a man appear on earth, "he would be scourged, tortured, bound, deprived of his sight, and, after having suffered all possible injury, be nailed to a

post." How prophetic of Christ's experience are these words! His life was trampled out by guilty sinners, but He submitted Himself to this iniquity voluntarily. He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. From all eternity He opposed His righteousness to the sinfulness which anywhere might rise in His universe. God in the person of Christ offered the protest of His holiness to the unholiness of men. The very birth of Christ, a spotless child in whom the Godhead dwelt bodily, was the beginning of this protest on earth. Here was the purity of God's image against the impurity of humanity. The issue was to prove how cruel is the sin of man, how all-conquering is the love of God. The result was certain. Prophets could predict it because it was inevitable that sin would go on developing heat and virulence until it wreaked its full power in the murder of the Son of God. This would show how infinitely mean and cruel is sin, and how persistent and overmastering is love. Wherever a cross is reared and wherever the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is celebrated, there the world is plainly taught that sin was so deadly it slew the Lord of Glory, and that redemption is so costly that it required the sacrifice of the Son of God.



The treason of Benedict Arnold was as detestable and foul as can be conceived. His name is as synonymous with treachery as that of Judas Iscariot; but those American citizens who debase their dignity for a bribe are just as guilty in form, though not in substance, as the man whom history has pilloried. Thus, wherever sin abounds, it drives a spear into Christ's side as certainly as did the brutal act of the Roman guardsman. All sinners share in the guilt of those who crucified our Lord.

It is useless to speculate what the attitude of our generation would be toward Jesus if He should appear on our streets. Our position is so entirely different from that of His contemporaries that it is difficult, if not impossible, to make any instructive comparison. We are

immeasurably more humane than people were in the first century. We have emerged from the stifling darkness of intolerance. We kill no man because he opposes our convictions or prejudices. We grow sentimental over criminals. We shed tears over wounded animals. We are essentially a humane people. The atmosphere in which we live is charged with philanthropy, and this is the result of sixty generations of Christian culture. The probability is that if Christ made His advent among us now we should receive Him with demonstrations of great enthusiasm. But if we could violently tear from our minds all those Christian conceptions which the centuries have brought to us, if we could put ourselves into the exact intellectual and religious environment of Christ's contemporaries, it is not unlikely we should, through our official representatives, treat Him exactly as did the people of His generation, and the blood of Jesus Christ might stain the twentieth century. In this sense it is easy to see the potential guilt of our age.

If we would appreciate this still more deeply, we have but to look into our own hearts for those obscure sins of the inner nature which we realize are capable of developing into the most open transgressions of divine law. Breeding and environment may save us from glaring vice and crime, but if suitable opportunity were provided and sufficient instigation were given, who could deny the possibility of the most degrading sin in his life? Take down the inscription in three languages which Pilate placed upon the cross of Jesus, which virtually affirms that for His claim to be King of the Jews He was condemned to death, and substitute a truer inscription, which shall declare that He was slain by the iniquity of those He came to save. Generations have gathered about His cross to acknowledge that sin killed Him—not His own sin, for He knew no sin, but the sins of the world. By the solidarity of the human race we are compelled to say, "our sins;" by the fact that we have rejected Him, "our sins." It is true that the sin of His generation killed Him, that the scribes and Pharisees drove Him to death, that Caiaphas was party

to it, that Pilate weakly surrendered to it, that Judas helped it. Yet we can not resist the conviction that we, too, are responsible for it. Our sins are in substance, though not in form, the sins of Christ's murderers. It was sin that brought Him to the world, and sin that smote Him in the world, and sin that racks Him in torture yet. By the sins of our lives we have crucified Him afresh and put Him to an open shame, and every sin in the twentieth century is a nail driven into His sinless palms.



The sect of Paulicians scornfully asked concerning the symbol of the cross, "If any man slew the son of a king with a bit of wood, how could this piece of wood be dear to the king?" Many persons who are perplexed over the philosophy of the atonement suggest a similar dilemma. Was Christ's death demanded in order to satisfy God's requirement for sacrifice? Is this the way in which eternal wrath is to be appeased? Does God find satisfaction in the instrument which tortured His Son? This is the complaint often heard: "You say glibly enough that it was necessary for Christ to die for my sins, but you do not explain in what sense it was necessary." It may not be important for us to realize the mystery of Christ's sacrifice, and no theory of it, nor all theories combined, could satisfy the full demands of reason; but there is one aspect of Christ's death which the consciences of men readily appreciate. They who look on Him whom they have pierced see not only the rebuke of their iniquity which the cross expresses, but also the promise of relief from the burden of guilt which their moral sense sharply manifests. Everywhere men feel the need of expiation for their sins, and often attempt to satisfy this requirement. The sacrifices of the heathen sufficiently disclose their realization of this necessity, and in our modern civilization there are frequent expressions of the same sentiment.

An officer in the German army killed a common mechanic in a drunken brawl. The military authorities

imposed what he felt was an inadequate penalty for his crime. When he had finished the punishment meted out to him his conscience still tormented him with the conviction of his guilt. He could find no rest of mind in his ordinary occupations. He therefore resigned from the German army and enlisted in the South African war on the Boer side. He fought desperately with utter recklessness, hoping that he might lose his life, and thus in some sense expiate his crime. For a long time he escaped destruction, but at length a bullet from the rifle of a British soldier laid him low, and as his life-blood ebbed out upon the Dutch veldt he doubtless congratulated himself that now at last he was paying proper penalty for his sin.

Dr. Samuel Johnson, when an old man, went to Lichfield, where he had lived as a lad, and where he had once refused to keep his father's bookstall, and stood there all day in the market place, while the rain pelted down upon his venerable head, to expiate the sin he had committed many years before against his father, feeling that he could not forgive himself until he had made public confession of his repentance and had done something to show his sincerity. Amid the jeers of the crowd which gathered to see such a strange spectacle the great man doubtless experienced some sense of relief.

But, as Lady Macbeth discovered that there was no charm to remove the stain of blood from her sinful hand, so all sinners finally realize that by no act of personal expiation can they remove the cure of their own evil lives. In such an emergency the cross of Christ suggests the only relief which can satisfy an awakened conscience. We may not know, we certainly can not know, the whole *rationale* of the atonement, but it lifts the soul into the consciousness of divine forgiveness to trust in the expiation which Jesus Christ declared, and His apostles believed, He made upon the cross.





### SECTION III.

## THE TRIUMPHANT MANIFESTATION BY RESURRECTION.

### CHAPTER XX.

A COMPARISON of the preceding section with this shows an impressive contrast between the sufferings of Christ and His victory over death. Here, as everywhere in John's Gospel, the spiritual purpose is uppermost. Typical scenes are chosen to illustrate the triumph of faith in the hearts of the disciples. No attempt is made to give a complete account of the events accompanying the resurrection (xx, 30), but a selection of incidents marks out the mood of the disciples following the crucifixion and the effect produced upon their minds by the appearances of Jesus after His death. The characteristics of the individuals chiefly involved in these manifestations are drawn with singular force and distinctiveness, and correspond with the delineations in the Synoptics. Each of the events carries its own teaching, but the foremost object of all is to convince the reader "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (xx, 31), and to extort from him the saving confession of Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" (xx, 28). The section contains three divisions, and is concluded by an explanatory note. (xx, 30, 31.)

1. THE FIRST APPEARANCE. (xx, 1-18.)
2. THE APPEARANCE AT THE EVENING ASSEMBLY. (xx, 19-23.)
3. THE MANIFESTATION TO THOMAS. (xx, 24-29.)



## XX.

### THE FIRST APPEARANCE.

#### CHAPTER XX, 1-18.

**We have had before narratives remarkable for beauty and for life-like minuteness of detail, but here they reach their climax.—*Sunday*.**

NOTHING is here said of the Sabbath which intervenes between the tragedy of the crucifixion and the triumph of the resurrection. The imagination has little difficulty in conjecturing the sensations of the disciples during this interval. They have lost their Master, who has been their dearest Friend, and there is every reason for supposing that for the moment they regard this loss as utter and final. We are not left in doubt concerning the feelings of the chief priests and Pharisees in the present crisis. (Matt. xxvii, 62-66.) Their eagerness to have Christ's prediction of resurrection robbed of even an apparent fulfillment was satisfied by the granting of Pilate's authority to make the guard about His tomb as secure as possible. The death of Jesus was certain. The proofs of it were ample and convincing. No doubt has ever been lodged against it. The witnesses were many. But the resurrection of Jesus is a fact falling into another class. It was not capable of the same kind of demonstration. No one observed it. The process of it could not be exhibited. From Matt. xxviii, 2-4, we learn that an earthquake occurred preceding the resurrection, and that an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled back the stone which had been placed before the sepulcher. But Christ's act of resurrection could not be described. "Like all beginnings, whether

in history or nature, it is hidden from view."—*Plummer*. The fact of the resurrection of Jesus is attested by those who saw Him alive after His death, commencing on the very morning of His rising and continuing with various intervals "until the day in which He was taken up" (Acts i, 2). Among these witnesses, John brings forward in turn Mary Magdalene, who saw Him very shortly after He had left the tomb; the ten disciples, Thomas being absent, to whom Jesus appeared on the evening of the same day; and Thomas who, in company with the other disciples, was granted a special manifestation a week later. He also records the fact that he was himself convinced that the resurrection had actually occurred by looking into the empty tomb before he had seen the risen Christ (xx, 8). In chapter xxi he gives a still later appearance, which was witnessed by a number of disciples, some of whom had not been reckoned in the apostolic band.

Following his habit of using only those events which in his view are most valuable for the spiritual purpose he has constantly in mind, John does not attempt anything like a complete record of the appearances of Jesus after His resurrection (xx, 30). The Synoptists give a number of manifestations and a variety of incidents to which John does not refer, though he must have been acquainted with all of them. Outside of the Gospels, noteworthy appearances are recorded in Acts i, 1-12; 1 Cor. xv, 5-8, the latter containing particularly important matter. John is sending his Gospel forth from a Church entirely familiar with the facts, and therefore he simply draws from his experience and observation those incidents which illustrate most effectively the triumph of faith in the disciples over sorrow, fear, and distrust, confining himself to those outward facts which in his thought most clearly embody spiritual truth. "His history of the Passion is the history of the descent of selfishness to apostasy; his history of the Resurrection is the history of the elevation of love into absolute faith."—*Westcott*. Peculiar to John's Gospel are the bestowal of the authority to pronounce absolution (xx, 23),

the manifestation to Thomas (xx, 26-29), and the events recorded in Chapter xxi.

The difficulty, if not impossibility, of harmonizing the resurrection narrative of the evangelists in every part must be frankly acknowledged, but the apparent discrepancies are such as would naturally arise from the accounts of persons giving independent personal testimony and not interested in making their stories agree. Perfect correspondence would have created the presumption of collusion. The very informality and simplicity of these narratives increase their claim upon our confidence. The characters and incidents are drawn with a freedom and likeness to life which compel admiration and belief. The figures of Peter, Mary Magdalene, and Thomas are characterized by great distinctness and conform to what we know of them from other sources. We have in this passage: 1. The Earliest Evidence of the Resurrection; 2. The Manifestation to Mary Magdalene.

#### **I. THE EARLIEST EVIDENCE OF THE RESURRECTION.** (1-10.)

All the evangelists agree in placing the resurrection on the first day of the week, which from this hour became "the Lord's day" and gradually supplanted the seventh day as the Christian Sabbath. Very early in the morning, while it was yet dark, so that the depths of the sepulcher could not be clearly seen, Mary Magdalene, a notable convert (Mark xvi, 9; Luke viii, 2), came to the tomb, accompanied or followed by other women (Matt. xxviii, 1-10; Mark xvi, 1-8; Luke xxiv, 1-12), in order to embalm the body of Jesus. They find that the stone which had been rolled before the sepulcher had been removed. Mary concludes from this that the body of Jesus had been taken away, and without pausing to ascertain whether this has been done by friends or enemies, she runs off to find Peter, whom she apparently regards as the chief of the apostles, and "the other disciple whom Jesus loved," these men apparently not living together, and announces that the Master's



body has been stolen from its resting place and carried she can not tell where. She evidently has no thought of resurrection, and leaves the tomb before the angels are seen by her companions. (Luke xxiv, 4.)

Mary's communication arouses instant concern in the minds of Peter and John. They start immediately for the sepulcher in Joseph's garden, and move as rapidly as possible. (Luke xxiv, 12.) John's youth enables him to outrun his comrade, and he arrives first at the open tomb. Stooping down before it and looking in, he discovers the linen clothes (xix, 40), but is restrained from entering by feelings of awe and reverence, while his mind is filled with anxious thoughts. In a moment Peter comes running up, and in his impulsiveness hesitates not to enter. He observes that the grave-clothes are properly disposed, and the napkin with which the head of Jesus had been bound is folded up by itself, showing that the removal of these wrappings had been careful and deliberate, so that neither friend nor foe had probably stolen the body. John is soon bending with Peter over these evidences of the Lord's voluntary departure, and is convinced that a literal resurrection has occurred. This is more than any of the disciples had anticipated, in spite of Christ's specific predictions. "He saw and believed" is the climax of this portion of the narrative. Complete faith has thus been created in the heart of the beloved disciple, if not in the heart of Peter, which will subsequently be confirmed by manifestations of his Lord in person. The utter unreadiness of these and other disciples for the resurrection makes their acceptance of the fact most significant as a proof of its reality. Having learned all that can be gathered from this empty tomb, and filled with deep amazement, Peter and John go thoughtfully away to their homes.

## II. THE MANIFESTATION TO MARY MAGDALENE. (11-18.)

Though the disciples have departed, Mary, whose return is not mentioned, remains at the entrance of the sepulcher weeping. She has not been convinced of the

resurrection by the empty tomb, not having considered the folded grave-clothes and the inferences to be derived therefrom, and being too deeply absorbed in her sorrow to do any reasoning. Moved by the desire to discover any possible traces of her Lord, she now peers into the tomb and beholds a strange sight, "two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head and the other at the foot, where the body of Jesus had lain." Here only in John's Gospel are the heavenly messengers recorded as appearing. (Compare i, 51; xii, 29.) But one angel is mentioned by Matthew and Mark. Luke speaks of two. Peter and John evidently saw none. But the appearances of angels (and all the evangelists report their showing to the women) are conditioned on spiritual laws. "The angels are not immovable and visible after the fashion of stone statues."—*Godet*. Those see them who are qualified. Attempts to explain away these angelic apparitions spring from ignorance of the conditions under which such manifestations are made. "The whole critical school might have rambled about the garden with hammer and spectacles, and would never have seen an angel or the risen Christ."—*Reynolds*.

The angels express their surprise at Mary's doubt by the question, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She replies in language similar to that which she has already used with the disciples (v, 2), but containing indications of a more personal sense of loss. "They have taken away *my* Lord, and *I* know not where they have laid Him." She is so fully possessed by this thought that she is not embarrassed or disconcerted by the presence and the challenge of the angels. Expecting no further help from these white-robed beings, and perhaps vaguely conscious of another presence, till now invisible, she turns about and suddenly faces the Master, but does not recognize Him. Not only is she absorbed by her reflections, but she is not expecting Him, and hence has not the inner power of seeing Him. Moreover His glorified body has undergone a mysterious change, which somewhat alters His appearance. (xxi, 4; Luke xxiv, 16, 37; Matt. xxviii, 17; Mark xvi, 12.)

The sympathetic questions from the lips of Jesus, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" are the first recorded words of the risen Lord, and they are addressed, not to His mother, as an inventor of such a narrative would be most likely to affirm, but to the sorrowful woman who has been the recipient of a great mercy at His hands, and whose devout gratitude has brought her, first of all His friends, to the broken tomb. She supposes Him to be the gardener, since no one else would be so likely to be about at such an early hour, and begs him, in case he has removed her Lord, to tell her where He is, that she may take Him away, so much does her love overestimate her strength.

The word, "Woman," has aroused in her no recollection of Jesus' voice, but the word "Mary," spoken with the utmost tenderness, thrills her inmost being and awakens her to an instant recognition. She quickly turns about and exclaims, "My Master!" and would doubtless have embraced His feet but that she was restrained by His command, "Touch me not!" Jesus does not mean to rebuke her for wishing to satisfy herself of the reality of His presence, for this is apparently not her purpose, and He would not have denied her what He later granted to Thomas. He does intend to correct her misapprehension. She feels that her Lord is now restored to her forever, and she exhibits her gladness in an act of devotion. But Jesus would have her understand that something other than a return to former conditions of fellowship has occurred. The victory over death runs farther than this. He stands in a new relation to His disciples now. He is on the point of ascending to the Father. Henceforth communion with Him will be not after the old manner, but according to an unique spiritual fashion. Until after His ascension this could scarcely be understood by His disciples, though He had clearly indicated it. (xiv, 18-20, 28; xvi, 7.) "He is *with* them no longer after the flesh; He only *appears* to them; soon He will *be in* them as the glorified Christ. The present interval is one of transition."—*Plummer*.

But while Mary may not now cling to her Lord, she

has a commission from Him to the disciples. "Go, tell My brethren [a new designation] that I am ascending [the higher life was already in process] unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God." Thus Jesus links Himself with the disciples in sonship, and yet distinguishes between His sonship, which is of nature, and theirs, which is of grace. "Father" involves relations of trust; "God," those of adoration. With this new view of her Lord's person, Mary hesitates not to leave Him, that she may fulfill His command, and joyously returns to the disciples to say she has seen the Lord, and to report His wonderful words.

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### The Broken Tomb.

*"Woman, why weepest thou?"—John xx, 15.*

It is recorded that William the Silent, standing with bowed head beside the coffin of the Emperor Charles V, smote it with his hand, and solemnly said: "He is dead; he shall remain dead. He is dead, and there is another risen up in his place greater than ever he was."

The soldiers who were commissioned to finish Christ's languishing life upon the cross were satisfied, after a brutal guardsman had thrust a spear into His side, that the troublesome teacher was dead. The chief priests, who, after Joseph of Arimathea had embalmed the body and placed it in a new tomb, induced Pilate to station a Roman guard about the sepulcher, were determined that Jesus should remain dead. And the bigoted authorities, who compassed His death, doubtless flattered themselves with the thought, "The mad enthusiast is now safely out of the world, and soon His influence will be eclipsed by the glory of men greater than ever He was." But how futile were their prophecies! William the Silent might safely predict that the dead emperor would nevermore walk among men and that more illustrious princes would make a shadow of his greatness; but they who affirmed that Jesus the Christ had vanished forever from

the view of the world were rebuked with an overwhelming denial within three days, and the carping skeptics who declared that His power would perish in the tomb are contradicted to this day by the amazing fact that Jesus of Nazareth dominates the thought of the civilized world.

The women who, with aching hearts and tender solicitude, came hurrying at sunrise on the first day of the week to look upon the spot where their Master lay, found the great stone rolled away from the mouth of the sepulcher, the prisoner whom they had entombed fled therefrom, and the grave empty, save for the presence of the shining angels, who said: "He is not here, He is risen as He said. Behold the place where they laid Him!" All Christendom is peering into that open, empty sepulcher. It has an irresistible charm for dying humanity. No storm-beaten adventurer of the olden time, desiring to know whither to direct his journey, ever sought the cave of the Cumæan Sibyl for a prophetic oracle more eagerly than the multitudes of death-stricken humanity now throng about the broken tomb of Jesus, the Christ, if haply they may discover therein some token of the future life, or bear away therefrom some consolation for the troubles of this present existence.

When men stand around the graves and monuments of those whom the world called great, they can not resist the tide of recollections that sweep in upon their minds. At the tomb of the illustrious Washington, whose name is now on every lip, men remember the weary struggle for American independence, the magnificent patriotism of the Revolutionary fathers, and the unambitious act of our first great statesman, who resigned an exalted throne of state that he might enjoy the humbler life of his own quiet fireside. At the tomb of John Knox, of Scotland, Andrew Melville, as he thought of the part which the sturdy old warrior played in that heroic struggle which established Protestantism in the British Isles, said with emotion, "Here lies one who never feared the face of man." When Napoleon Bonaparte, in the hour of his glory, came to Potsdam,



where Frederick the Great is buried, he entered the vault and stood quietly by the grave of the illustrious soldier. Then, as he recollected how the great man brought his little principality through blood and fire to be one of the foremost powers of Europe, he reverently and feelingly said, "If thou wert living still I had not been here."

At the open sepulcher of Jesus of Nazareth, emotions of a grander measure are awakened. The marvelous character of His achievements, the divine sympathy of His life, the outrageous manner of His death, the sublime object for which He lived and died, the infinite love He bore us, the gracious benediction He left us, the glorious salvation He brought us,—these inspiring memories combine to make His sepulcher the holiest shrine in the universe and to fill the souls of men with deepest joy.



Herder said, "The resurrection of Jesus is, humanly speaking, so sublime, touching, and beautiful that, if it were a fable, one might wish it were historical truth." This predisposition of the human heart to accept the story of the resurrection saves the Church from the necessity of proving its main contention. The earliest apostles made it the substance of their appeal to the heathen world. It is still effective wherever the Gospel is preached. The negative consequences of denying the resurrection are so difficult to reconcile with reason, that infidelity has on its hands a far more difficult task in undertaking to disprove it than the Christian has in his effort to demonstrate its credibility. Infidelity must first solve the enigma of a progressive series of prophecies, all of which were fulfilled save the climax. It must explain why the pyramid, which is built in every other particular in strict accord with the plans of the architect, stands without its crowning apex; for, without the resurrection, all Christ's antecedent human experiences would be inexplicable and the long ages of preparation for His advent would be devoid of meaning. At the



exact time holy men had predicted there appeared a man bearing the precise features they had pictured, who underwent experiences accurately corresponding with their prophecies, who constantly declared Himself to be the very person of whom prophecy spoke, who suffered martyrdom for this profession after the manner the Scriptures had foretold, who before His decease repeatedly declared that He should not remain in the tomb, but should rise again on the third day. On the supposition that Jesus did not rise again, infidelity is compelled to explain the amazing fact that He whose life fulfilled every other specification of prophecy failed at the last moment and at the most critical time and left incomplete what by every law of reason would be regarded as inevitable. When this has been achieved, infidelity must explain the immense concurrence of testimony to the historical verity of the resurrection, which has been satisfactory and convincing to thousands of the most acute minds for many centuries. Whoever is rash enough to reject the historical truth of Christ's resurrection may just as boldly attempt to expunge any event which the records of mankind have preserved for our instruction. If by any subtle reasoning it can be proven that Christ did not rise from the dead, by employing the same logic it can be made to appear that Alexander is a myth, the campaigns of Cæsar a fiction of the brain, and all the chief occurrences in history the invention of dreamers; for the resurrection of Christ is as well established as any event the credibility of which depends upon the authenticity of human records or the truthfulness of eye-witnesses. When infidelity has destroyed our belief in the trustworthiness of the testimony to Christ's resurrection, it still has the heavy burden of accounting for the marvelous successes of the Christian apostles, based on an alleged falsehood; for it is no more difficult to explain the antecedent human experiences of Jesus, in conjunction with the theory that He did not rise from the dead, than it is to explain His influence and power over men and institutions after His disappearance from the world.

Let us suppose that Christ is in His tomb, never to be disturbed until His dust has mingled with the mold of earth. A handful of ignorant fishermen, people of the commoner sort, start out to maintain the religion He founded. They are to oppose their humble characters, and still humbler words, to gigantic powers; Judaism with its splendid history, its ancient ceremonial, its frantic jealousy of competing religions; Paganism, cruel, pitiless, and apparently omnipotent, with men of genius to write denunciations, and armies of rugged soldiers to execute them, against all assailants of Roman heathenism. But within two months after Christ is dead and buried, a fisherman thunders out the doctrine of the resurrection. Three thousand people are converted and the Christian propaganda has been inaugurated. The same teaching sweeps thousands into the infant Church in a few weeks. The illustrious pupil of Gamaliel, in whom converges the best scholarship of Hebrew and Greek civilizations, Saul, the Cilician, is captured. He becomes a missionary of the new faith, whose feet tread the chief seats of the empire, whose voice rings out over Cæsar's household. His work swiftly ramifies, impressing all grades of society. It spreads like wildfire. In three hundred years Constantine bows his knee and Rome officially recognizes the faith of the fishermen. Jews accept a martyred Galilean as their Messiah. Greeks acknowledge a crucified Jew as their God. The fierce Northern tribes exchange their warlike deities for the humble Nazarean carpenter's Son. The influence widens through every century. Nation after nation swears fealty to Christ, until nearly five hundred millions of human beings in all parts of the world rise up to say, "I believe in Jesus Christ; . . . the third day He arose from the dead." Infidelity must explain the phenomenon of a mighty Church based on an indefensible falsehood, if Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead.



The sun never seems to shine more brightly than when, after having been long imprisoned behind gloomy clouds, it suddenly bursts upon the view. The azure

beauty of the sky seems never more radiant than after some wild and fierce storm has swept its face. The world looks brightest just when we emerge from the shadow of a great grief; and we shall understand the joy of the resurrection, if we go back a little to the scene of Christ's death and linger with the disciples in despondency about His tomb. Is it possible to imagine the sensations of those who loved Christ, when they saw Him suddenly wrested from their fellowship and made the victim of Jewish hatred and prejudice? Can we faintly reproduce in our hearts the fluttering despair which settled down upon these disciples when they saw their Lord drop His thorn-crowned head upon His breast and heard Him cry, "It is finished?" "Finished? Aye, finished forever," thought the skeptical Thomas. "Finished forever," jeeringly responded the blasphemous mob. "Finished forever," suggested Pilate, though his mind continued to torment him with doubt. "Finished forever," painfully muttered Judas, while he inwardly cursed his own treachery. "Finished forever," said the chief priests and Pharisees, though they gave the lie to their words by sending a Roman guard to His sepulcher. "Finished forever," despairingly sighed the unbelieving disciples, as they went from the place of their Master's cruel death to devise projects for their future. Every fond hope of power and sovereignty and royal association had vanished into thin air. They would now go out into the world to brook the jeers of a heartless mob, to be branded as fanatical enthusiasts, to be added to the long list of self-duped men, and to bear the stigma of their foolishness to the last day of their melancholy lives. It must be a stout heart indeed which could bear all this. Moreover, they had lost a Friend of such tenderness and bravery as they had never witnessed before. His eye had always moistened with pity when it beheld grief. His heart had ever been moved with compassion when He came into contact with sin. His hand had ever been raised to shield the weak or uplift the fallen. They would never look upon His like again, and now that He is gone, the very sweetness of life has been removed forever.

But the men were not alone in their sorrow. There are women whose fidelity to Christ is one of the most affecting instances connected with the great catastrophe. There is a sacred mystery in the relation of womankind to the Savior of the world. It is an unnatural woman who needs argument to persuade her to acknowledge Christ. The religious disposition of women is marked even in Paganism. Pressense records the case of a widow whose Epicurean husband had caused an inscription to be placed on his tomb denying the possibility of the future life, who herself declared, in the most positive manner in a parallel inscription, that while her body remained beneath the ground her soul was an inhabitant of heaven. Under the influence of Christian teaching, woman's religious susceptibility is even more apparent. The sacred passion within her responds almost instantly to the simple story of Christ's love and sacrifice. Woman may well be loyal to Christ since He, of all priests, prophets, and reformers, has done most by His influence in the world to elevate her to her proper position. It is with a kind of holy satisfaction, therefore, that one observes woman last at the cross and earliest at the sepulcher of our Lord. While the fear of violence drove away the disciples, whom we might have expected to remain with Christ to the end, the women stood tearfully surveying the Man of Sorrows in the agony of death, and when the tragedy was done, they tenderly performed the last sad burial rites and prepared spices and ointments for the embalming of His body. All honor in song and story to the women of Judea, who thus affectionately ministered to the Savior.

Let us now hasten to the grave of Christ. Mary Magdalene is there, who of all the company of women is most devoted to Him whose holy influence has drawn her from sin to holiness. At break of day she came hither with Joanna, Salome, Mary, the mother of James, and another Mary, perhaps the sister of Lazarus. They have gone now, after satisfying themselves that the tomb is empty. Peter and John have been here, and they are now gone; but Mary can not go. She loves Him who

saved her too fondly to leave hastily and thoughtlessly the spot where He lay. It is true He is gone, but there is a strange fascination about this sacred spot, and yielding to a sorrow which she can not control, she weeps bitterly, ever and anon gazing with anxious solicitude into the open sepulcher. The great drama is completed. She can not think her Lord has risen. Some foe has stolen Him away. Where has He been concealed? With the conviction she possesses, it is not strange she weeps; and if, with the same conviction, the disciples of Christ to-day should contemplate His open sepulcher, they might well give themselves up to lamentations and be eager to rid themselves of the consequences of their delusion.

The evidence which Mary almost immediately received that Jesus had not been destroyed is not greater than that which Christian souls to-day experience in their own spirit. "The kingdom of God is within you" said the Master, and the one infallible proof of Christ's resurrection from the grave is the fact of a Christian resurrection in the human spirit. The power of an endless life which the Christian experiences proceeds from the living Christ. It is not a dead Christ, moldering in an unbroken sepulcher, mingling His ashes with the dust of Asia for two thousand years, who takes men from the horrible pit of sinful indulgence and from the miry clay of vicious practices and puts them upon the solid rock of eternal life and establishes their goings in the way of righteousness. It is not an imprisoned Christ who sets men free from the dungeon and slavery of sin. It is not a defeated Christ who gives men victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. He who accomplishes such miracles in men is Himself a miracle greater than any He performed. He is the Master of life and the Conqueror of death, and He has vindicated His title in the consciences of men who have passed from death into life. Tell saved men that on the third day after Christ's crucifixion, before the sun had leaped above the Eastern hills, there came swift as lightning messengers from the heavenly courts, who undid the



bolts of His prison-house and, standing on either side of the portal, with bowed heads, adored the King of kings as He passed out to begin His eternal reign, and they will not dispute you. They know that their Redeemer lives, because He lives in them. They know that they shall see God, for they are certain they have walked with Him in this world, and they exclaim with Peter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again into a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."



The breaking of that tomb was not a mere temporary restoration to life. Christ is in the world bringing humanity to Himself, eventually to triumph over all the enmity of the human race and ready until that time to help death-stricken souls with His sympathy and strength. Mary Magdalene wept because she had lost the presence of Christ. Step up to her and rebuke her! Tell her she has the teachings of Christ, His blessed example, the remembrance of His doctrines, the memory of His preaching! Tell her to dry her tears and, like a philosopher, endure her pain with stoical fortitude. Does she stop her weeping? No; for Mary is no philosopher. We may talk as we will about a religion which satisfies the intellect. What men and women require is a sense of God's presence which satisfies their hearts. The resurrection of Christ confirms the constant fellowship of the Lord with His disciples. There is a Christ, victorious over death and hell, reigning high in heaven and in the lowly earth. His presence in the world is proven beyond any peradventure.

Napoleon Bonaparte, when left to himself upon the Island of St. Helena, had time to ponder the power and influence of Jesus Christ. "Can you conceive of Cæsar as the eternal emperor of the Roman Senate," he asks, "and from the depths of his mausoleum governing the empire, watching over the destinies of Rome?"



Such is the history of the invasion and conquest of the world by Christianity; such is the power of the God of the Christians, and such is the perpetual miracle of the progress of the faith and of the government of His Church." This is not quite a true parallel, for we have not a dead Christ ruling from His tomb by the power of His posthumous influence, but a living Christ, controlling men by His gracious presence, giving life by His personal fellowship and producing joy by His spiritual communion. Renan said: "He is a thousand times more living, a thousand times more loved, than He was in His short passage through this life, in that He presides still day by day over the destinies of the world. He started us in a new direction, and in that direction we still move."

"Woman, why weepest thou?" asked the angel of the grief-stricken Mary. "Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him." But they could not take Him away; all the powers of ill in hellish confederation could not put Him out of sight. He lives forever, He is in the midst of His people, walking with them as with the two disciples on their way to Emmaus; appearing in the hour of gloom, as He did to the eleven as they sat at meat; advancing into their daily toil, as He did with Peter and the other fishermen upon the borders of the lake; showing Himself in the public assembly, as He did to more than five hundred brethren at one time. Everywhere Christ is walking upon the earth; if we listen we can hear His words.

There is a beautiful tale concerning Richard Cœur de Leon, who in one of his famous adventures during the Crusades was taken prisoner, and confined within the gloomy walls of an Eastern dungeon. There was in Richard's court in England a favorite minstrel, who was wont to beguile his master's weariness with song. There was one air that always cheered the king; and the faithful singer went singing this song outside the walls of many foreign prisons and fortresses, until at last one day he heard it echoed from within a dungeon

and knew the voice, and cried out in ecstasy, "O Richard! O, my king!" That song had floated around many prisons and had been heard within by many other prisoners, but it meant no more to them than a beautiful song by an idle wanderer; but to Richard it meant deliverance and happiness and home. So Christ may be conceived as stepping with stately tread through the world, passing the prison houses and dungeons of the earth and saying with great tenderness, "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me." To some who hear His words His song is but that of a poor wayfarer, but to those who know the life of God, it is joy unspeakable and full of glory.



Christ's resurrection is the pledge of our conquest over death and the grave. The certainty that death is not man's tyrant but man's slave is of incalculable comfort, and this assurance we have. "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept." He went into the tomb and through the tomb and out of the tomb, and fearlessly will we follow Him. It is not a dark valley; it is a broad, brightly lighted avenue to the realms of bliss. Christ has made it so. Others went in to light it up, but miserably failed. Some carried in the torch of reason, but the damp and suffocating darkness choked it out. Others took in the candle of philosophy, but the light only flickered for an instant and then expired. Christ went in, and the blaze of glory which followed Him flooded the deepest recesses of the tomb and showed us God and heaven beyond. We go now to the graves of our loved ones and peer through them, not into them, and hear one saying by our side, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

History has conferred upon William, Duke of Normandy, the title of Conqueror. Landing upon the soil

of Britain in 1066, at the battle of Hastings he overcame the Saxon king, Harold; pushed his way into the interior; subdued whole tribes, and virtually made England his own; but he died like a dog, surrounded by men who only awaited his death in order that they might plunder his body. When carried to his last resting-place, a voice from the great concourse of people cried out, "In the name of the great God, I here forbid this body to be covered with earth that is my right." Alas! for such a conqueror as this, who, after subduing kingdoms, falls himself a prey to the king of death. Take away his title; there is only One who deserves it—Jesus of Nazareth, who began His conquest at the point where William ended. He broke open the tomb. He robbed the grave of its victory. He took the sting of death away. The arrows of the last enemy were snapped in pieces.

Some years before his death, Benjamin Franklin composed an epitaph for himself in these words: "The body of Benjamin Franklin, printer,—like the cover of an old book, its contents torn out, and stripped of its lettering and gilding—lies here, food for worms. Yet the work itself shall not be lost. For it will—as he believed—appear once more in a new and more beautiful edition, corrected and amended by the Author." This is a truly exquisite testimony to the belief of a great soul in the resurrection of the dead. But it would have been forever impossible without the rising of Jesus the Christ.

## XXI.

### APPEARANCE IN THE EVENING ASSEMBLY.

#### CHAPTER XX, 19-23.

We hail the teaching of the Fourth Gospel as establishing for us the inspiring persuasion that the divine and human are not separated by an impassable chasm, but are in their innermost essence one; that, in the portraiture of the Logos made man, humanity at its best is nothing less than the clearest and most gracious revelation of the Eternal God, and that Divinity at its greatest has been manifested through the human.—*H. R. Reynolds.*

HAVING appeared to individuals—to Mary Magdalene (11-18), to the disciples who went to Emmaus (Luke xxiv, 13-32), and to Peter (Luke xxiv, 34), all in the same day, it was natural and almost inevitable that Jesus should manifest Himself to the disciples as a body. The angels had prepared Mary for the manifestation made to her, and she in turn prepared the disciples for the manifestation about to be made to them. John's narrative should be compared with Mark xvi, 14, and Luke xxiv, 36-48. This incident occurred on the evening of the first day of the week, "the same day" of the resurrection, "that day," as the original runs, that ever memorable day, "the birthday of the Christian life," as Westcott calls it. For a similar emphatic and significant use of "that," see i, 39; v, 9; xi, 49; xviii, 13. It is rather late in the evening, when indeed the Jews would regard the second day as having begun; but John links this event with the others which have already made the first day so notable. It was "toward evening" when the disciples who walked to Emmaus with Jesus constrained Him to abide with them for the evening meal (Luke xxiv, 29), and sufficient

time must be allowed for them to return to Jerusalem. (Luke xxiv, 33.) Perhaps it is about eight o'clock at night when this manifestation of Jesus takes place. The room in which the disciples are assembled may be that sacred place in which the Last Supper was partaken and where later they are to meet for prayer and conference. (Mark xiv, 15; Acts i, 13.) Others than the apostles are present. (Luke xxiv, 33.) It has been suggested that Joseph, Nicodemus, and some of the Seventy were there; also Mary of Bethany, Simon the Cyrenian, and others. The occurrence falls into two parts: 1. The Miraculous Appearance; 2. The Marvelous Gift.

### I. THE MIRACULOUS APPEARANCE. (19, 20.)

In the place where the disciples are assembled the doors are shut, a circumstance which is also mentioned in connection with the subsequent appearance of Thomas (verse 26); and recorded in both instances doubtless to mark the supernatural character of Christ's advent to the room. Precautions have been taken against the enemies of Jesus, who are now apparently ready to wreak their enmity on His disciples, as He had predicted would be the case. In the midst of their muffled conversation about the wonderful happenings of the day, Jesus suddenly stands in their midst. John does not intimate in what way this marvel is accomplished, nor have we any means of knowing. It is evident that after His resurrection, though Jesus possessed a real and corporeal form (Luke xxiv, 39), it was not subject to the limitations of ordinary human bodies. (Luke xxiv, 31.) "Before the resurrection He was visible, unless He willed it otherwise; after the resurrection it would seem that He was invisible, unless He willed it otherwise."—*Plummer*. When Jesus was about to go to His death He had comforted His disciples by speaking "Peace." (xiv, 27; xvi, 33.) Now that He is appearing after death, and while they are affrighted and incapable of adjusting themselves immediately to this mysterious visitation, He says again, "Peace." It is the ordinary salu-

tation, with which they have long been familiar, but it now has a new and deeper meaning pronounced by One who has returned victorious from the grave.

As if to relieve at once the trepidation of the company, as well as to establish their conviction of His personal identity, Jesus exhibits His hands and His side. Luke, who does not mention the thrusting of the spear into His side, says that "He showed them His hands and His feet" (xxiv, 40). The revelation seems too good to be true, and while they are in a state of wonderment and hesitancy Jesus calls for food and eats it before their eyes. (Luke xxiv, 40-43.) Every vestige of doubt now being removed, the joy of the disciples is unrestrained. It is the true beginning of that reunion which Jesus had promised them. (xvi, 22.)

## II. THE MARVELOUS GIFT. (21-23.)

Jesus now speaks "Peace" once more, probably at the end of the interview, which has doubtless been more extended than the narratives of Luke and John indicate. The first utterance has restored confidence and composure; the second is intended to prepare for service, for it is coupled with a summons to work. "And as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." Almost the same words had been used in His intercessory prayer. (xvii, 18.) The disciples are dependent upon Him even as He is dependent upon the Father, and they are commissioned to perform a similar work. (2 Cor. v, 20.) His mission henceforth is to be executed by them. He is "the Apostle" (Heb. iii, 1.); they are "apostles." At the forefront of their mission is the proclamation of the resurrection, with all its gracious implications. Faithfully do they adhere to their obligation. (Acts i, 22; ii, 32; iv, 2, 33, etc.)

Having heard a renewal of their commission, the disciples now receive an impartation of blessing to qualify them for their work. This passage (22, 23) is peculiar to the Gospel of John. The word translated "breathed" is the same as that used in the Septuagint to describe



God bestowing upon Adam the power to become a living soul (Gen. ii, 7). This breathing is not to be considered merely as the emblem of the divine inspiration, but the means employed to convey the Spirit. It is an anticipatory gift, an earnest of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, in much the same manner as Christ's return from death was a token and prophecy of His abiding spiritual presence with them. The word rendered "received" is more accurately "take," being identical with that used in the institution of the Lord's Supper. (Matt. xxvi, 26; Mark xiv, 22; Luke xxii, 17.) Jesus breathes upon the entire assembly, but the responsibility of accepting or rejecting His gift rests upon each individual.

Accompanying the bestowal of the Spirit is the conferring of an authority which marks most deeply the identification of the Church with Christ in a common mission. (Verse 23.) The power to remit or retain sins is imparted not to the apostles alone, one of whom is indeed absent, but to the whole Christian community as representatively present in the assembly. It belongs not to ministers as a distinct order, but to all who are in communion with Christ. It is a continuous authority, enduring as long as the life of the Church. It is the right to declare the fact and the conditions of forgiveness not to individuals by individuals, but to groups of men by the Christian community. Christ had already given authority to determine terms of fellowship with His Church. (Matt. xvi, 18, 19; xviii, 18.) He now imparts the power to declare the terms on which forgiveness is granted, and whether or not this has been done, in virtue of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual discernment which results from this gift. To affirm the power of any individual to pronounce absolution as a personal prerogative is to wrest this Scripture from its meaning.

### The Great Gladness.

*"Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. . . . He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."*—John xx, 20-22.

"I NUMBER only the sunny hours" was the legend on an ancient dial plate, which is repeated on many modern ones. The meaning is perfectly obvious and indicates a true philosophy of life. John had just been recording events which could scarcely be called happy, but from this point he will depict scenes inspiring and joyous. The appearance of his Lord through the resurrection from the grave is a theme upon which he dilates with great rejoicing.

When Charles Kingsley met the Rev. Mr. Coleridge, who had formerly been his tutor, he threw his arms about his neck and exclaimed, "O, my dear old master, my dear old master!" A similar exuberance of feeling must have swept over the hearts of the disciples when they first beheld their Master restored to them from the embrace of death. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord."

They were not glad at first; on the contrary, they were terrified. Nor was their perturbation unreasonable. They were gathered in an evening assembly; they were drawn together by mutual interest, and were shut in from the world because of their fear of the Jews. Rumors of Christ's resurrection had spread through the city, and no one could tell what influence these stories would have upon the authorities, who might now seek to destroy the disciples of Jesus and so impair the effect of His resurrection. The little company spoke in muffled tones. The questions which ran around the circle showed trepidation and expectancy. The subject of their conversation was the experience of the past few hours. Suddenly, without any intimation, the figure of their Master stood before them. No window had been opened, no door had been turned upon its hinges, no agitation of the air had presaged the coming of a person from with-

out; only a soft radiance fell upon their gaze, and then the person of their Lord was revealed to their eyes. They could not believe that Jesus actually stood before them; they were confronted by a ghost. And whatever eagerness men may show to meet disembodied spirits, no man ever fancied he actually saw one without a certain measure of disquietude. Shakespeare has used his specters with remarkable facility and knew that they always awakened terror in the minds of men.

Jesus immediately sought to establish the composure of His disciples. He gave them unmistakable evidence that He was not a spirit. He pointed to His hands yet bearing the wounds received on the cross, and His feet still bruised by the nails which had been driven into them, and His side with its gaping wound, made by the brutal soldier's sword thrusts, and said, "Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." These evidences established His personal identity. He was the same Christ who had been crucified and was now alive again. Then, to confirm the evidence already given, He asked for food. "And they gave Him a piece of broiled fish and of a honeycomb, and He took it and did eat before them." When the disciples saw that the *real* Christ was before them, their hearts were filled with exceeding great delight. Then Jesus said to the company, "Peace be unto you," and assured them that He would now send them out into the world for their sublime task, and at the same time breathed on them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The whole scene was calculated to induce the highest joy in the hearts of these disciples. They were beholding their Lord and receiving at His hands endowment of power for their future work. All skepticism concerning His person and mission must now cease forever. In prospect of the future, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.



The world is still forever joyous in the presence of the real Christ. False Christs have gone out into the world. They are phantoms of diseased minds, or willful

fabrications of evil men. They have terrified humanity. They are mere specters and ghosts creating consternation in the souls of men. In the Church of the Madeleine in Paris is a fresco representing Napoleon Bonaparte seated on a cloud of glory, looking down upon a series of pictures exhibiting the triumph of the French Church. Above all is Jesus pronouncing blessing upon the work. But this is a spectral Christ, a mere ghost; for the genuine Christ could not speak benediction upon the work of a Church whose successes had been gained largely by oppression and despotism, nor could Napoleon be properly classed as a Christian apostle. In Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment," Christ is represented as a brawny athlete, condemning trembling sinners to eternal destruction and sweeping them into perdition like flies cast into the fire. This is not the real Christ, but a false ghost, a fraudulent caricature of Christ. It is not surprising that men are terrified by such an apparition. It is comforting to know that this is not the real Christ, for He is forgiving, and not vengeful.

There is a bloodless figure of the Middle Ages which has been projected into the thought of modern times, a ghastly spectacle, wretchedly overdone in the devotional life of the Roman Church, which is both ghostly and untrue as a revelation of Christ. When one beholds in every corner of Europe an emaciated figure reared upon a cross, and sees Christ forever depicted as bruised and beaten and disfigured, he is not surprised that Romanists flee to the Madonna, who is human, wholesome, and cheering. The sacrifice of Christ for the sins of humanity is in itself the center of our system of religious thought and teaching, but the oft-repeated pictorial representation of His death is misleading. Christ has made one offering for sin, and now in living reality moves through the world to achieve the salvation of society. He is saying to the world, "See, a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." He is not a dead Christ who now and then comes to chosen individuals with secret disclosures of His presence. He is a living Christ, who

exercises Himself in the affairs of mankind by direct participation. As He drove the profane traders out of the temple, as He rebuked the false religionists of His day, as He undertook to defend those who were oppressed in His own generation, as He even protected a lost woman from the hostility of her assailants, so He is in the world to-day, partaking of the life of humanity, pushing Himself into the contests of the world, redressing the grievances of the oppressed, defending the humble against the mighty, and showing Himself the Advocate and Deliverer of all the needy.

Infidelity takes the rags and tatters of theology and dresses up a grotesque figure and calls it Christ, and terrifies the world with its scarecrow. It hopes to foist this bogey on the world to discourage faith in the living Christ. It is the duty of Christians everywhere to expose this counterfeit. Christ does not come to disturb the social joys of the world, nor to inflict upon humanity the misery of an unreal religion. These and other fraudulent representations of Christ must be defined as phantoms, which no one needs to fear. The real Christ, when clearly perceived in His living presence, produces joy and peace in the hearts of men. The disciples were glad when they realized the coming of their Lord. A friend of incalculable tenderness and strength had been restored to their fellowship, but He had not come back without a message for them. He commissioned them anew to a task great enough to require the fullest energies of the profoundest intellect, and He proposed to endow them with sufficient power to discharge their sublime obligations. It is a real Christ who breathes on His disciples and says, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."



The great need of the twentieth century Christian is propulsive power. The lack of momentum is a common defect. Having been started in the course of godliness, many are continuing only by a series of impulses or successive pushes. The demand for increased efficiency



is continuous and insistent. This was the need of Christ's disciples, who were ordinary persons with common deficiencies. Jesus could send them, but would they go against a brutal world? He could commission them, but would they be qualified? He must needs make them ready; it would be cruel if He did not, and their efforts would be futile without special qualification. He solves the question by saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

That is a very impressive picture, carrying us back to the garden of Eden, where the Almighty is represented as gathering up a heap of dust, shaping the figure of a man, and then blowing into his nostrils, when, lo! the shape becomes instinct with life, rises, walks, and enters upon the activities of a human career. But to that physical life is communicated something which distinguishes man from other animals, which is called "spirit." It wills, it thinks, it feels, and makes man sovereign in the earth, so that the Psalmist may truthfully say, "Thou hast put all things under his feet." Without this superior endowment men would be among the feeblest of animals. The horse is stronger, the elephant has a keener sense of touch, the dog has a better scent, the eagle a finer eye, the bird is a better traveler, the fish a better navigator. As a mere animal man is beautiful and deft, but a poor competitor with other creatures. But God having blown into his nostrils, he becomes a marvel who can match his puny strength against the forces of the universe.

The endowment required by these disciples must be as much superior to the ordinary gifts of human nature as the endowment of the human spirit is superior to the innate characteristics of the most intelligent of the lower orders of creation. Without such a special endowment the disciples would be ineffective and inconsequential. Something extraordinary would be required to keep Peter's enthusiasm from dissolving into mere vapor; to sustain John's fervor when the Master's companionship is removed; to counteract the skepticism of Thomas; to make James more an idealist, while not less a practical man; to give the whole company nerve and sustained



purpose. If God will blow into the nostrils of these persons and make them living souls, they will be rendered capable of their tasks. This is the meaning of Christ's action when He breathes upon them and says, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

By this visible token we understand the significance of inspiration. It does not proceed from a book, or a sermon, or a poem, but from the person of an exalted being. It is not a kind of magic, possible only to persons of a peculiarly susceptible temperament; it is the transmission of a divine energy into human personalities, by which their native powers are heightened and intensified, so that herdsmen, shepherds, vinedressers, farmers, fishermen, tentmakers, become writers and speakers of divine messages, and the commonest men become extraordinary personages. Christ breathed on these disciples and said, "Be ye inspired of the Holy Ghost." The possibility of this divine inspiration is the crown of human glory. "There is a spirit in man and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." Now, these disciples understood the meaning of inspiration. They felt themselves to be instruments of the divine power and wisdom. In the olden times men were wont to attribute even their physical strength, when it attained a marvelous degree, to divine influence. Samson, Gideon, and David ascribed their power and skill to the grace of God. Modern science, which declares gravitation, heat, light, chemical action, and other forces to be manifestations of one fundamental energy, will not deny that muscular strength proceeds from Him who is the life of humanity. Mental illumination, such as was necessary for performances of unusual quality, devout men had been in the habit of tracing to God. So Deborah, Miriam, Moses, and Bezaleel had accredited their intellectual gifts to the divine munificence. Spiritual efficiency the old prophets had always regarded as an expression of divine love. They combined all the results of divine inspiration in their view of the prophet. The term used to describe him involves the idea of boiling, effervescing, like a geyser.

The intention of Jesus in transmitting divine power to His disciples was to produce wondrous effects in their lives. They were to be charged with immense enthusiasm and quickened with intense energy, so that they could achieve extraordinary results. This divine influence He proposed to perpetuate in the lives of their successors. The need of the present age is not so much for cultivated teachers and deeply intellectual leaders, but for persons who are intensely inspired with power to quicken others and to create enthusiasm in the dullest minds. This is the gift of God. It can not fail to impress the world. Emerson said that a religious poet told him that he regarded his poems as valuable, not because they were his, but because they were not his; they came from God Himself. Jesus would have His disciples realize that His own personality was communicated to them for their constant use when He said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." It is a gratuitous benefaction to His followers. The most wonderful thing in the world is available without money and without price.

"It is heaven alone that is given away:  
It is only God may be had for the asking."

Another marvel in consequence of imparting divine power to Christ's disciples would be the miracle of an unstained character in the midst of a corrupt world. In the book of Daniel there is a wonderful story of three Hebrews who refused to worship a monstrous golden image erected by the Babylonian monarch. These men were flung into a furnace of fire, heated to seven times its accustomed intensity; so hot, in fact, that the officials who threw them into its devouring flames were instantly consumed; but the three Hebrews walked unscathed in the fire, and by their side a fourth figure, like to the Son of man. Summoned from this burning hell, they stepped forth without a hair singed or a garment scorched, or so much as the smell of fire upon their clothing.

The story taxes your credulity, but here is a miracle greater than this—a human being lives blameless and

unhurt in the midst of influences conspiring to corrupt and destroy His integrity. God has placed the moral nature of man in very close and perilous relations to the external world. A man's soul lies very near the surface of his being. We know that, because his spirit shines in his eyes, sounds from his lips, flashes in his smiles, moves in his actions, and comes out in every manifestation of grace or awkwardness. The spiritual man and the physical man are delicately strung together. That is a fact of much advantage, but it carries with it the peril of tragic possibilities. The soul can not express itself thus easily without being itself in turn easily affected by outside influences. From the surface to the center is no further than from the center to the surface. The telegraphic communication from the outer world is perpetual. That which happens on the outside is quickly known on the inside. Through all the gateways of sentient being throng those agencies which can both please and pain, both give life and take it away. The pollution of the inner life is no surprise to those who see the peril of the outer life, yet it is the perpetual miracle of our holy religion that human beings live holy lives in the midst of debasing influences. There are many white souls in the black, murky, and sooty world. The secret of it is such an infusion of God into human character as raises men beyond the power of evil to contaminate. We are disposed to question the promise of Jesus to His disciples that they should take up serpents into their hands with impunity, that if they drank any deadly thing it should not hurt them, but here is a miracle surpassing that of escape from death when struck by the fangs of poisonous serpents. A life unharmed by the corrupting influences of a world reeking with sin is the kind of marvel Jesus expected would be exhibited by millions of His followers when He said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

## XXII.

### THE MANIFESTATION TO THOMAS.

#### CHAPTER XX, 24-29.

The more the Fourth Gospel has been focused in the light of criticism, the more convinced do we become that it is the work of one extraordinary mind.—*Reynolds*.

THE subject matter of this portion is given by John alone. It is a fine delineation of the native qualities of the mind of Thomas. The same deft hand has given us the most of what we know concerning the character of this disciple. He is mentioned by the Synoptists only as having been chosen as an apostle by Christ. (Matt. x, 3; Mark iii, 18; Luke vi, 15.) In other places in John's Gospel we have touches which correspond to the impression here made regarding Thomas. When Jesus proposes to venture into territory which is perilous and the other disciples would dissuade Him from His purpose, Thomas says, though utterly despondent, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him" (xi, 16). When Jesus is addressing His final words to the disciples on the evening before His death, and has said that His followers know the way whither He is going, Thomas exclaims, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way!" (xiv, 5). He always saw the darkest shadows in the picture, and the utmost consequences of a misfortune. We have in this passage, 1. The Test Which Thomas Demanded; 2. The Triumph of His Faith.

#### I. THE TEST OF THOMAS. (24, 25.)

Thomas is significantly styled "one of the twelve." Though a member of the apostolic band had deserted his Lord, the designation of the Twelve was too familiar to be dropped immediately. John counted this fellowship

glorious beyond comparison. The disciples all evidently shared the feeling that the breach made by the defection of Judas should be repaired as quickly as possible (Acts i, 15-26), and this desire to hold the company intact may have been foreshadowed in their apparent effort to restore Thomas to faith, when he showed signs of lapsing into deadly unbelief. His Greek name of Didymus is mentioned twice by John, here and in xi, 16. The word means "twin," and in this connection may be used with an intention to mark the double character of Thomas, who was not only a skeptic by disposition, but was also a man of stout heart and inflexible courage. His absence when Jesus made His appearance in the former evening assembly was not caused by cowardice, but may have been due to his natural despondency in view of the death of Christ, the known hostility of the Jews to the disciples, and his doubts concerning the tales of Christ's resurrection which had been brought to him. He would wait until the mystery had been cleared, and meanwhile he would reflect in silence and solitude. Yet he had not abandoned intercourse with the other disciples, who kept telling him that they had seen the Lord. But his mood would not pass away at their words. They had probably been the victims of an optical delusion. The fatal wounds of Jesus were constantly before his mind, and they drove away all hope that death, of which he was certain, could be followed by life. The reputed resurrection must be supported by evidences as sure as those which proved the death of the Master. The other disciples had received an ocular demonstration, as they supposed. (20; Luke xxiv, 39, 40.) He must have that, and more. He would put the matter to the ultimate test which could satisfy his mind. He does not promise that he will believe after he has obtained this. He simply says that until he has this evidence, belief is not to be considered (25). The belief to which he refers pertains not to the resurrection alone, but to all that he has been taught about the person and mission of Christ. He has gradually come to have some measure of faith touching these things, but his confidence has been shaken by the death of Christ.

## II. THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH. (26-29.)

After eight days the disciples are together again, and Thomas is with them. The disciples had been commanded to go into Galilee, where Jesus would meet them. (Matt. xxviii, 7; Mark xvi, 7.) Perhaps they had delayed on account of the obstinacy of Thomas. Since the appearance of Jesus in the evening assembly they had been pondering the fact of the resurrection, and when the day of the week returns on which He revealed Himself to them, they probably think of the possibility that He will manifest Himself again. The week through which they have just passed has been uneventful. In spite of his doubts, Thomas has not deserted his comrades. Perhaps he even hopes for some evidence of his Lord's triumph over death.

Into the assembly as before Jesus comes and makes the salutation of peace. He is the same being who defied closed doors on the previous occasion, and His presence brings joy to all hearts. He speaks as though He had overheard the words of Thomas when he proclaimed the ground on which he would be disposed to show faith. The material character of the test which he demanded comes home to his heart. Jesus warns him that he is on the way to faithlessness. "Do not become faithless," He says, "but believing." The word of Christ, "Behold!" is enough for Thomas. He does not wish to apply the test he has proposed. To feel the wounds and thrust his hand into the riven side would not give him firmer evidence than he already has. He is convinced that Jesus not only stands there in His own person, but that He is all He ever claimed for Himself. He sees that while an ocular demonstration can establish the identity of his Lord, faith leaps beyond the testimony of the senses and perceives Christ to be truly divine. "My Lord and my God!" is not an ejaculation sent aloft to heaven; it is an ascription of Deity addressed to Jesus.

Thomas is assured that while belief based on evidence has its rightful place in the order of life, faith springing from spiritual apprehension is of finer quality. Then follows that beatitude which belongs to believers in all



ages, who, having not seen, yet rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

The confession of Thomas is the climax of the struggle between belief and unbelief. Faith is triumphant. This is the end which John has set before his mind to show, and the emergence of Thomas from skepticism to certitude is exactly what the apostle expects to see reproduced in the souls of many who read his Gospel.

#### CONCLUSION. (30, 31.)

With these words, John brings his work to an end. Later he affixes an appendix to his Gospel (xxi). How long after the completion of the main part of his Gospel he added this epilogue, it is impossible to tell, or whether the Gospel was ever published without it. But here is apparently the formal conclusion of his writing.

Numerous miracles and other evidences of Christ's divine authority have been given to His disciples, which are not set down in this place. These covered the whole field of His public ministry, for John does not refer merely to the marvels of the resurrection. These wonders of His character and mission brought the disciples to faith. As John summed up the effects of Christ's public ministry in Chapter xii, so now he marks by these words the particular significance of his Gospel. He has written those things which were best calculated to produce the twofold purpose which has animated him in writing. He would convince his readers that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing in Him they may have eternal life. That Jesus is the Christ, and that He is the Son of God are separate conceptions in the thought of those to whom this Gospel first comes, though they can not logically be divided in the minds of those who realize the truth of Christ's person. When Christ's office is fully understood, and His grace is appropriated by faith, eternal life becomes a present possession. (iii, 15; v, 24; 1 John v, 13.)

### The Sincere Skeptic.

*"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."*—John xx, 29.

A GENTLEMAN of refinement said the other day that he never went to London without spending much time in the national portrait gallery, where he could read the history of England for many centuries in the most impressive and vivid style. Do thoughtful people turn for a like purpose to the portrait gallery of the Scriptures, where the history of God's dealings with men in matters pertaining to their eternal destiny is transcribed in delineations as striking as any ever made upon canvas? That section of the gallery known as the New Testament is particularly effective and discloses such varieties as one would naturally expect where the work of many artists is displayed. The portraits exhibited here are taken from life. When painters idealize, they seem compelled to make all their work conform to a single type. The men and women of Du Maurier and Gibson and other modern artists are usually distinguishable by the characteristics which uniformly mark their work. Students of ethnology declare that if we were dependent for our knowledge of the persons of men and women through successive generations upon the representations made by artists of various periods, we should be forced to believe that very great changes had occurred in bodily structure from century to century. Photography, by accurately depicting the faces and figures of men, corrects this impression. The men who gave to us the portraits of the New Testament have wrought with photographic fidelity. Each of the great figures is differentiated from the others. It is impossible to charge the writers with having invented the characters they describe. If they show a disposition to present the most favorable aspects of those whom they portray, they nevertheless frankly reveal the deficiencies and limitations of their heroes. John's portrait of Thomas is an illustration of this truth-

fulness of delineation. The doubting disciple is treated with the utmost candor, but also with the gentlest charity. He is a man who sees most readily the darker aspects of life, anticipates the direst consequences of every misfortune. Such a temperament yields easily to despondency. But Thomas was a man of unflinching courage. He would face what appeared to him certain disaster with resolution and valor. When the other disciples were disheartened by the prospect of peril to their Lord, Thomas said: "Let us go with Him, that we may die also." He saw nothing but the blackness of night before him, yet he proposed to confront his fate with a dauntless spirit. His tendency to despondency had drawn him apart from the other disciples temporarily. The tales of Christ's resurrection seemed to him the vain conceits of dreamers. The declaration that his comrades had beheld their Lord returned to life failed to convince him. He was absent from the evening assembly when Jesus brought joy to the hearts of His disciples by manifesting Himself in their presence. He had doubtless wished to seclude himself for the purpose of meditation and for quiet grieving over the loss of his great Friend, and participation in any gathering of the disciples was painful to his thought. When he was assured that Jesus had actually appeared to the disciples, he said: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hands into His side, I will not believe." A man of this sort, when he has been convinced, is exceedingly valuable to religion. Christianity owes much to the honest doubter. When he has been conquered by the truth, the Church has received a valuable acquisition. Not only will he be the firmest of adherents to the faith, but he will possess unusual influence in convincing others of the verity of religion. John evidently assigns a position of the utmost importance to the final testimony of Thomas. He virtually concludes his work with the story of the doubting disciple's surrender to the overpowering impression which Christ's self-revelation made upon him. He says in effect to all who read his Gospel: "You see

that the evidence of Christ's divinity was so overwhelming that even a skeptic like Thomas, who could only be satisfied with an absolute demonstration, was compelled to yield his misgivings in the presence of the risen Christ, and to exclaim with perfect faith. 'My Lord and my God.' "



Distinctions must be drawn between doubt and unbelief. Doubt is question; unbelief is denial. Doubt is intellectual; unbelief is moral. One is a confession that the head is not satisfied; the other is a declaration that the heart refuses to accept. Unbelief means not that a man *can not* believe, but that he *will not* believe. Doubt is fair, willing to investigate; unbelief is unfair, unwilling to seek the truth. Doubt is modest and unassuming; unbelief is arrogant and self-assertive. Doubt is friendly to religion, and has provoked much of our finest apologetic literature; unbelief is hostile to religion, and seeks only to resist the influences of truth. Doubt deserves to be treated with great considerateness; unbelief is to be attributed to hardness of heart. Jesus showed the utmost kindness toward minds affected by doubt, but He spoke in terms of sharp condemnation to hearts of unbelief. Unbelief is sometimes called doubt, but its temper makes this an inaccurate distinction. Infidelity is not doubt, but denial. It has not followed a course of impartial investigation. It has treated truth with contempt.

The indifferent skeptic is a common figure who does not deserve serious consideration. When Thomas Paine accounts for the blunders of his "Age of Reason" by saying, "I had forgotten just how the printers left that passage, for I keep no Bible;" when David Hume confesses to Dr. Johnson that he has never read the Bible with attention, not even the New Testament; when Robert Ingersoll tells a newspaper reporter, who asks him if he has ever made the Bible the subject of thorough study, "I have read the Bible some, and have heard it talked about a good deal;" when thousands of persons, who have never given honest inquiry to the deep prob-

lems of religion, frequently deny the validity of the Bible, they give evidence of being unworthy of earnest attention.

There is a form of unbelief which springs from an immoral life or an impure character. This is the hardness of heart to which Jesus refers in condemning the people of His generation who rejected Him. It commonly happens that individuals regard their photographs as unsatisfactory representations. When their friends exclaim, "What an excellent picture!" they often say, "I do not admire it in the least; I hope I do not look like that." Something akin to this occurs in the experience of the untrue man, when he gazes into the depths of that wonderful mirror of human character called the Bible. He is scandalized by the portrait which looks up to him from its lucid pages, and turns away from the hateful exposure of his infirmities with an affected contempt for its truthfulness. Much popular infidelity has its origin in this distaste for the faithful rebuke of sin which the Gospel conveys.

There is an intellectual skepticism which is born of pride. It is assumed that to question the doctrines of Christianity is a mark of mental acuteness. The Bible is referred to as an obsolete book. Young persons with little experience in life, and less knowledge of philosophy, will speak glibly of desiring to be abreast of the times, and will turn with supercilious disdain from the book which their ancestors revered. It is enough to say that such persons have never covered the centuries of study essential to bring them up to the times in which they live. Yet one must not forget that there is a genuine skepticism, deserving of all kindly consideration, which does not fall into the categories which we have been using.



Doubt is a misfortune rather than a sin. It arises from a constitutional defect of mind. Happy the man who believes without a struggle, having been born with a kind of genius for faith. But he who is of the temperament of Thomas is rather to be commiserated

than to be condemned. "Belief is great, life-giving," says Carlyle. This he applies to nations as well as to individuals. The effect of doubt upon the minds of men is depressing in the extreme. It is pitiful to see Voltaire, who did not distinguish between the true faith and the corrupt Church which was misrepresenting it, sitting in old age at Ferney, sunk in melancholy after a life of extraordinary intellectual effectiveness. Mr. Cross told George Eliot that he always found a tinge of sadness in her novels. Strauss, Rousseau, and other skeptics have been far from happy men. Doubt hangs a pall over the mind, puts thorns in the pillow, fills life with grim specters, and eats out the heart of joy; but faith throws a flood of light upon the pathway, fills life with the fragrance and beauty of flowers, and adds the joy of anticipation to every experience.

Doubt is to be pitied and to be gotten rid of, not because it is damnable in itself, but because it is destructive of character if not corrected. No one will ever be condemned because he can not believe, but only if he will not believe. This principle will hold good touching the most fundamental doctrines of our faith. Sincere doubt may exist in a good life, and is no necessary evidence of a sinful course. Surely Thomas is an illustration of that possibility, and other men in all ages of the Church have been affected by the same influence which made his progress in faith difficult. A great minister of truth, referring to a certain doctrine related to the future life, said, "I have to fight a battle over that every morning of my life."

"You tell me doubt is devil-born;  
I know not. One, indeed, I knew,  
In many a subtle question versed,  
Who touched a jarring string at first,  
But ever strove to make it true.  
Perplexed in faith, but not in deeds,  
At last he beat his music out.  
There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half our creeds.  
He fought his doubts and gathered strength,  
He would not make his judgment blind,  
He faced the specters of the mind,



And laid them. Thus he came at length  
 To find a stronger faith his own;  
 And Power was with him in the night,  
 Which makes the darkness and the light,  
 And dwells not in the light alone."

Doubt conquered in this way has its compensations. Thomas, convinced by irrefragable proofs, was better able to meet the doubts of other men, and could always point to his own experience as proof of Christ's willingness to correct the misgivings of those who wish to believe in Him.

The thing to do with doubt is to satisfy it, not attempt to suppress it. It is like a subterranean fire which will burst out despite all attempts to confine it. You can not sit upon a volcano. Doubt is like the energy of vegetable life, which forces its way up against all obstacles and lifts immense weights which have been imposed upon it. Doubt is like hunger, not a thing to be ashamed of, but a thing to be satisfied. We do not say to the hungry, "Be fed," and expect them to be grateful for our appeal to their imaginations. We should be perfectly honest and frank about our doubts. A thing is never true until it is true to us, however it may commend itself as truth to other minds. Nor should we puzzle our souls over non-essentials of doctrine. We are to remember that the Philippian jailer was simply told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; that Peter's creed contained only the declaration, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" and that the confession of Thomas was still briefer, "My Lord and my God."



In solving doubt we should avoid some of the mistakes of Thomas. It is a blunder to reject the testimony of others. The word of the disciples was reliable. Their evidence should have created a strong presumption in the mind of Thomas that Jesus was actually risen from the dead. The young man in one of our cities who said he would believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ if a

man like Gladstone would confess faith in that tenet, and who yielded his assent to the teaching when he learned that the Prime Minister of England held it, showed a worthy confidence in the testimony of a mind stronger than his own.

Fisher Ames used to say that if he were absent from Congress when an important measure was being discussed, and he could learn how Roger Sherman voted, he was content to cast his influence on the same side, so great was his confidence in his friend's wisdom. The father of Daniel Webster was a member of the New Hampshire convention which ratified the Constitution. His constituents had requested him to vote against the adoption of this instrument. Finally he was convinced that his duty demanded his support of the measure, and he said: "I have followed the lead of Washington through seven years of war, and I have never been misled. His name is subscribed to this Constitution. He will not mislead me now." The testimony of those who have experienced the revelation of Jesus Christ to their own souls ought to be allowed its due weight in influencing doubtful souls to accept the truth.

It is a mistake for doubters to prescribe the limitations or tests which they will apply in ascertaining the truth. It is evident that Thomas went beyond his rights in saying that, unless he could have a perfectly satisfactory demonstration according to tests which he regarded as ultimate, he would not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. In fact, he did not say that he would believe, even after these tests had been applied, but that he demanded the satisfaction of these tests before he would be inclined to believe. From which it is apparent that his mood was not justifiable. His position is much like that taken by Mr. Tyndall and others, who demanded that a prayer-test be applied to certain wards in the hospitals, to ascertain whether there was any advantage in prayer, as shown by the better results secured for the sick as compared with those who were not subject to this advantage. Such a demand is virtually asking God to satisfy the curiosity of unspiritual minds, a thing

which Christ steadfastly refused to gratify. The assumption that we have the right to say to God, "Fulfill the terms which I name, or I will not give You the support of my faith," is arrogant to the last degree; and the position of the scientists, who wish to test prayer as they would any physical agency, is as childish and unwarranted as that of the boy who prayed for some bauble he greatly desired for many nights, and then concluded his prayer on a certain evening with the declaration, "If I do not receive this by to-morrow, I shall turn heathen and worship idols."

It is a mistake to demand actual proof for a great moral truth. It is impossible to measure a spiritual principle by the testimony of the senses. There is an old fable which says that five blind men went to visit an elephant. One of them seized its trunk, and affirmed that the elephant was a kind of serpent; another embraced its leg, and was certain that the elephant was a kind of tree; one leaned against its side, and swore it was a wall; another grasped its tail, and said it was a rope; the last man ran against its tusk, and called it a particularly unpleasant kind of spear. Spiritually blind people reach equally misleading conclusions from their examination of the truth. Hoping to satisfy their minds by tests which are limited to fallible sense, they fall into the error of misconceiving the very truths they are attempting to analyze.

Thomas found that his tests of Christ's identity were utterly inapplicable. He forgot that he had resolved to make them, until Jesus bade him put his fingers into the print of the nails and thrust his hands into the wounded side; but in the rapturous vision of his Lord's presence, which filled the soul of the doubting disciple, all misgivings and skepticism disappeared, and he cried out, "My Lord and my God." All doubts will be dissolved in the presence of such a manifestation of Christ's glory. It needs only that the soul shall come frankly to Him who is "the Light of the world" to receive such a clearing of all mystery as shall satisfy the deepest needs. We may

safely leave the skeptical soul with the Lord who dealt with doubt so kindly and gently.

If doubt has begun to insinuate itself into any Christian soul, it will be well for that soul to inquire whether life itself has not been blurred by sin, for it is when one departs from fellowship with the Master that questions arise concerning the truthfulness of the religion which formerly caused so much cheer. To put aside the evil of one's way, and to come frankly face to face with Christ, is the surest method of scattering doubt and filling the soul with glad confidence. To work for Him in the field of Christian activity, to become absorbed in making the world better by His method of self-sacrifice, to yield one's self completely to the control of Him who said, "If any man will do My will he shall know of the doctrines," will bring any doubting soul out of the darkness of skepticism into the clear day of perfect faith.



## THE EPILOGUE OR APPENDIX.

### CHAPTER XXI.

WITH the words written at the end of Chapter XX, it is evident that John intended to conclude his Gospel. He did not purpose to record any more "works and words" of Jesus, deeming what had been written as sufficient for his object. But a serious misunderstanding had arisen concerning some words Christ had addressed to Peter regarding the future of John. From this utterance it had been assumed that "the disciple whom Jesus loved" would never die. To correct this misapprehension, John composes this Epilogue and affixes it to the Gospel, which was probably never published without it. In order to make the matter perfectly plain, John describes the circumstances which introduced the disputed remark of Jesus. Though the appearance recorded here is of great importance in itself, interest really centers in the Lord's declaration touching the destiny of Peter and John. Some question has arisen respecting the authorship of this Epilogue, but the many points of similarity in style and language which it bears to the main body, and the fact that it appears in every extant manuscript of this Gospel, seems to establish its right to be called the work of John's hand. Our study of the Epilogue divides itself as follows:

- I. THE APPEARANCE AT THE SEA OF GALILEE. (xxi, 1-14.)
2. THE FINAL COMMISSION OF PETER. (xxi, 15-23.)
3. CONCLUDING NOTES. (xxi, 24, 25.)





## XXIII.

### MANIFESTATION AT THE SEA OF GALILEE.

#### CHAPTER XXI, 1-14.

The Gospel of John is the Gospel of the manifestation of Christ.—*Weston.*

THE disciples and other believers had been told to meet Jesus after His resurrection in Galilee. (Matt. xxvi, 31, 32; xxviii, 7-10; Mark xvi, 7.) It had been impossible to fulfill this request with unanimity until Thomas had been restored to the faith. A full week after the resurrection had elapsed before this was accomplished. Then the believers withdrew from Judea, where the various appearances had hitherto occurred, to Galilee, where the episode now to be considered took place, as also the meeting at a mountain according to the appointment of Jesus with the eleven. (Matt. xxviii, 16.) Godet understands that this was the assembly at which Jesus appeared before more than five hundred persons at once, mentioned in 1 Cor. xv, 6. John does not record the command to go into Galilee, but narrates in this passage one of the consequences of the interview which followed the keeping of that tryst. Matthew gives only the appearances in Galilee; Mark and Luke only those in Jerusalem; John some in both places. We have here, 1. The Fishing in the Lake; 2. The Breakfast on the Shore. The whole incident is an introduction to the remarkable conversation with Peter which follows.

#### I. FISHING IN THE LAKE. (1-8.)

With an indefinite mark of time—"after these things"—such as frequently occurs in this Gospel (v, 1; vi, 1; vii, 1), and which is suitable to an appendix which has

no intimate relation to what precedes, John introduces the episode by the Sea of Tiberias, designating that body of water by a name used in this Gospel alone (vi, 1). Here John says Jesus manifested Himself again to His disciples, not meaning thereby to ignore any other appearances which may have occurred meanwhile, but linking this manifestation to those appearances to the disciples which he has previously narrated (xx, 19-30). Of the seven persons declared to be present on this occasion, as representing the apostolic body, five only are named: Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, John, and James—all of whom may be presumed to have belonged to this vicinity. The unnamed disciples were probably Andrew and Philip, as the account in i, 40-43, would suggest, though some hold that the anonymous disciples were not mentioned because they were not of the Twelve, the word "disciple" being often used in a general sense for believers (vi, 60, 66). Nathanael, who is mentioned in this Gospel only, is usually identified with Bartholomew, and Cana, the place of his birth, is probably referred to here because he was the only member of the party who did not dwell on the lake shore.

While these men wait for the further manifestation of their Lord, probably at Bethsaida or Capernaum, they grow restless, eager to know the determination of their future. Moreover, something must be done to gain a livelihood in the interval. Peter takes the lead, as usual, and proposes to return to his nets, temporarily at least. All readily agree to this practical measure, and at nightfall, the best time to ply their craft, they put out for the fishing ground, only to be met by failure after a night of toil. (Compare Luke v, 5.) With the coming of the dawn they descry through the mist a figure on the beach which they do not recognize, though it is that of their Master, so much is He changed through death and resurrection (xx, 14). Moreover, they are pre-occupied with their work. But Jesus will reveal Himself to them, and so calls to them over the water, asking what fortune they have experienced. They send back to Him the disconsolate message of their utter failure.

He had addressed them in the tones of familiar and friendly interest, calling them "lads," and His question anticipates a negative answer. They have had an opportunity to realize that without Christ success is not to be expected. They are now to have proof that under Christ's direction failure is impossible. Jesus bids them cast their net on the right side of the ship, promising them an ample recompense, which is fulfilled by a result so great that they are unable to draw the net. At that moment the characteristics of Peter and John are clearly brought out. By the action of subtle laws of mind and spirit, John instantly apprehends who the unknown person on the beach is, and Peter leaps into the water as soon as John's conviction is uttered, that he may reach his Lord in the shortest possible time. The one possesses an insight which enables him to interpret the sign immediately; the other acts without a moment's reflection on the information which another has brought him. He can not wait for the slow progress of the boat. He throws about him his fisher's coat, or upper garment, for he had stripped himself for his task of everything but his undergarment, and flings himself into the lake, which at this point was shallow enough to be waded; or Peter could easily swim the distance, which was but a hundred yards. Then the other disciples come more slowly, either in the fishing boat itself, if that is what is meant by "little ship," or in a smaller boat attached to this vessel.

## II. THE BREAKFAST ON THE SHORE. (9-14.)

When the fishermen step on the shore they find a fire already kindled, with fish and bread laid upon it. Either because more fishes were required, or because Jesus would teach His disciples that all His gifts were to be used, He commands them to secure the haul they have made. Simon Peter, ever ready to act, goes out into the shallow water, where the boat is now lying, and drags the net ashore, a mark of his physical strength as well as of his eagerness to serve. With an old man's

memory of details occurring long years before, John specifies the exact number of fishes taken and remarks their unusual size. Fanciful interpretations of the number one hundred and fifty-three have been attempted; for instance, that the number is intended to symbolize Gentiles, Jews, and the Trinity, or to illustrate the universality of the work of Christ and His apostles. But the really significant fact is that John remembers the exact number and, after his method, records it in the same way that he recalls the six water pots at the Cana wedding feast (ii, 6), and the five loaves and two fishes, the five thousand men, and the twelve basketfuls of fragments at the feeding of the multitude (vi, 13). It is an eye-witness who is writing, and he is a very faithful historian of the events he chooses to record.

The difference between this miraculous draught of fishes and that which occurred at the beginning of Christ's ministry (Luke v, 1-11), suggests a difference of application for the two incidents which has been noticed by many writers. The earlier miracle may be said to represent the Church in the present age, the later the Church in its perfected state, or the Church militant and the Church triumphant. In the one good and bad are gathered; in the other, only the good. In the former the net breaks, in the latter it is not rent. In one case the number of fishes is indefinite; in the other it is fixed. In the former, the fishes are taken on the stormy sea; in the latter, on the shore of peace. These differences can scarcely be regarded as accidental.

When Jesus bids His disciples come and breakfast, they apparently hesitate for a moment. They are filled with reverential awe. The Master is much altered in appearance, yet none can doubt His identity. Their Lord is before them in unquestioned reality. The solemn sense of His supernatural character holds them in check. Then the Lord comes to them and imparts His gift, and they partake of His bounty. It is not said that the Master Himself ate. He stands before them in the nature of the Provider; they are the beneficiaries of His grace. "This is the third time that Jesus showed

Himself to His disciples," says John, meaning doubtless that this is His third appearance to them in a body. It is a manifestation of profound importance to this company of apostles, for it has taught them the great lesson of reliance upon Christ for all the requirements of their sacred task of fishing for men.

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### The Fishermen of Galilee.

*"Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee."*—JOHN XXI, 3.

THE fishermen of Galilee, with no halos round their heads, such as the artists love to paint; with no seraphic saintliness in their countenances, such as the mystics love to dream of; with no fingers bent in apostolic benediction, such as the ecclesiastics fondly imagine—just ordinary human beings, such as one would find in any thriving fishing village, neither more intelligent nor more stupid, average people in all respects. Jews they were, however, with a long inheritance of brains and nervous energy, and hence rather better men physically and mentally than one would fall upon outside of Palestine, but very natural men, notwithstanding. Let us thank God for that! A delegation of angels had not been sent from the celestial world to make up the apostolic college; beings with whose perfections we could have had no patience, and whom every one would wish safely back in heaven as soon as possible. They were men with good red blood in their veins, and the common faults of humanity in their composition. There are seven of them waiting for Jesus, probably at Bethsaida—Thomas the doubter, Nathanael of Cana (the only man mentioned who was not born at the seaside, "an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile"—not many like him now, it is thought), James and John, and two disciples not named, and Peter. Let us not forget Peter. He is such a delightfully human person. There never lived a sinner who did not



have a fondness for Simon Peter, as soon as he met him. He is a blundering simpleton many times, but so generous, so hearty, so full of enthusiasm, and so capable withal. It would be most depressing to take Peter out of the New Testament. He is so much like people we know—so much like ourselves, in fact, that his absence would make a sorry loss. His career is encouraging and inspiring, because it reveals what God can do with a very imperfect man. Jesus understands the man's limitations and possibilities, when He says: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." What a great chance opens up before any of us when Peter is recalled! How effective he became! He preached the most fruitful sermon on record, with three thousand converted people as the immediate result. He knew human nature well, having so much of it himself; and when the Holy Spirit had touched him, he could play upon the hearts of men as upon a musical instrument, and beat out strains of penitence, faith, worship, and service. And Peter's comrades were all simply men, no more and no less, just fishermen of Galilee, but called to be apostles, the kind of persons God is yet compelled to use.

The best thing these men could think of doing, after three years of association with Jesus, after the incomparable glories of the resurrection, after the wonderful self-disclosures the Son of God had made to them, was to go fishing. Are they not a little disappointing? Remember that they are but men. They had come out of the shining of Christ's revelations to the bleak, bare world of common things. They had moved down from the heights to the lowly earth, where the practical problems are. Jesus had commanded them to meet Him in Galilee. They had tarried a week or more to get Thomas restored to the faith. Then they journeyed to the northern province which they called home. Arrived there, they did not know what to do. A reaction set in after the excitements of the recent weeks. They are waiting for something further to occur. Meanwhile,

they drifted back to themselves and became natural once more. It was well for them that this was so, and it is encouraging and instructive for us. They were men, and they did what they knew how to do—they went fishing. These men, who were to be illustrious and to bless mankind with their service—the apostles—proved themselves available as the servants of men by being normal human beings. That is an inspiring fact for us all.

A young man had so much veneration for John Wesley, that he thought it useless to try to imitate him in anything, great or small. But one day he read in a letter of Adam Clarke that, once when Wesley visited him, he said, "Adam, are there any crabs on these shores?" "Yes," was the reply. "Then let us go down and catch some." That is a goodly picture of John Wesley. Take off cassock and bands, rub off that super-human sanctity from his brow, give him a crab-net, and let him wade into the water. That is your real man, with brawn as well as brain, with good healthful instincts, and animal virility in him. Such a man will make an impression upon his fellows when he preaches righteousness.

We can not always be on the stretch. An Easter service all the year round would lose its charm after awhile. On the Mount of Transfiguration perpetually would unfit us for hard work. We ought to be able to appreciate the letting down of Simon Peter and his companions, and the fitness of choosing such men for apostles, and we ought to remember that Jesus must still depend on such persons to carry forward His work. He requires the fisherman, the plumber, the carpenter, the lawyer, the broker, the butcher, the baker—all kinds of men, and out of these He makes saints and saviors of society.



The fishermen of Galilee are men of action, and "of such is the kingdom of heaven." Back to Galilee, on the familiar shores of a lake where many marvelous

things have happened, with the breath of the inland sea in their lungs, the breeze fanning their bronzed cheeks, the dancing waters in their eyes, the call of the deep in their ears, the smell of the fishing boats in their nostrils, the blood in their veins begins to warm, and their nerves to tingle. They want to get upon the unsteady surface of the flood, and feel the pull of the net. The joy of living, the intoxication of toil is upon them. They have been waiting long; so at least it seems, and nothing has come of it yet. "I go a fishing," says Peter. "Let us all go!" the others respond, and off they push their craft to try their fortune at the old, accustomed business.

It is a man of action who gives them their initial impulse. It is uniformly so in the history of great movements. Men of reflection discover the truth, but men of action put it to the test of utility. The former dream about exploits, write down their musings in books, make prophecies of what will one day be accomplished; the latter seize the moment and the task, and lead their fellows into great performances. This is Peter's distinction. There were more thoughtful men than he, but none more ready to do than he.

Such a disposition goes far to compensate for the inconsistencies and incongruities of a man like Simon Peter. He was first to confess faith in Christ, and first to deny Him under fire. He was first to be panic-stricken and first to enter the sepulcher of Christ. The Master called him "Blessed" and "Satan" in one interview. When Peter affirmed that Jesus was "the Son of the living God," Jesus exclaimed, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." A little later, when Peter protested against the declaration of his Lord that destruction at the hands of His enemies was fast approaching, Jesus said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou art an offense unto Me." To reconcile these conflicting verdicts requires deep insight into character. But Peter's earnestness of temperament atones for his angularities. When, at the Last Supper, Christ would

wash his feet, Peter warmly refuses to humiliate his Lord by submitting to His proposal. But when he is told that without this washing he can have no part with Christ, he eagerly asks that his hands and his head, as well as his feet, may undergo the sacred ablution. In each case he runs ahead of proprieties, but in each case he illustrates the ardor of his spirit. The main thing always is that readiness to do the utmost, a quality which atones for many deficiencies. What a flat life it would be if all its parts must agree with mathematical precision. A famous preacher was asked how he reconciled two apparently contradictory statements in his discourses. He replied, "I don't reconcile them; reconcile them yourself." To be forever consistent in speech and action is not half so important as to be always earnest to accomplish a good work. The heartiness of Simon Peter's activity made him an invaluable disciple of Jesus.

One can imagine Peter saying to his comrades, after several days of restlessness, while the Master delayed to come: "In the name of conscience, let us do something. Dawdling along these shores amounts to nothing. I go a fishing!" His example is contagious. His associates exclaim, "Let us all go!" The man of action leads. That is the way of the world for all time.

There is deep wisdom in the impulsive action of those fishermen. There is no hope in idleness. Activity will take away the despondency of leisure. When Sir Astley Cooper was consulted by a rich man, whose lack of occupation had bred all sorts of humors in his body, he said, "Live on six pence a day, and earn it." There is a kind of religion in work. There is true poetry in toil. The hum of spindles in our factories is genuine music. The roar of traffic in our streets makes a symphony in the ears of God. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," is not only good sense, but sound piety. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," is the divine sanction for ceaseless labor.

If one's work lacks elegance and grace, if there seems to be nothing spiritual in it, let it go on in the spirit of devotion, and it will become an instrument of re-

ligion. It was a fine thing for Colonel Waring to clean the streets of New York as they had never been cleaned before, and to give to Cuba such a sanitary system as her citizens had never dreamed of till he came. He gave his life for this latter task, and in the light of it his work was divine. It is right to put a halo round his head. He achieved a kind of sainthood. Simon Peter was right. If there appears no higher thing to do, let us go fishing. In the securing of a livelihood there is godliness, and it may turn into a revelation of God. Apostles can never be made of indolent men. The fishermen of Galilee were available for service, and they sailed into fellowship with their Lord when they put out for a night of fishing.



7 The fishermen of Galilee were men of faith. It was not in their purpose to repine because the Lord was slow to arrive. They were not heartsick and doubtful. He would come in due time, as He promised. Meanwhile, they would go on naturally, that, when He did come, He would find them expectant and ready. They were like that famous New England patriot who, when the celebrated "dark day" threw its deep shadows over the desks of the Connecticut legislators, and timorous souls were for quitting their places, thinking the day of judgment had come, bade the candle be brought in, and the business of the assembly finished, that the body might be found faithful in any event.

Peter may have recalled the fact that his Lord had come to His disciples on the sea more than once before this time. He had wandered along the shore of this very lake, and called His followers from their nets. He had walked the waters on a memorable day. Perhaps now He would appear in some such fashion. "I go a fishing," says Peter. "Let us all go," his comrades reply. And out upon the glancing waters they push their boat, as the sun sinks down the western sky.

Their faith was justified. Certainly the Master will

not draw nigh while we are dreaming, but when we are doing. He will appear in the common toil, if ever He comes at all. They fish all night and catch nothing. If despondency now takes temporary possession of these men, it is not strange. But in such a crisis as this the Master may be expected. The proverb in the Talmud is often verified, "When the tale of bricks is doubled Moses comes." In the hour of failure Christ appears. We never need applause when success is smiling upon us. Then men will be most obsequious to us. They will almost tread upon one another in their anxiety to fawn upon us. It is when the affairs of life are unsatisfactory, and the plans we have devised are falling into ruin, that we crave help. Then it is that Christ appears. Happy are we if we have vision enough to discern Him. In the dim light of morning, through the film of mist which overhung the lake, the fishermen descried a figure which they did not recognize, and heard a voice which was strange to them, though its tones were full of sympathetic interest. Over the water came the cry, "Lads, have you caught anything?" "Not a thing," they answer. "Cast your net on the right side of the boat," shouts the voice from the shore. It is always the right side that Christ points out. It is not a matter of the chart, but of the Master's wisdom. Now they were not able to haul in the net, so weighted was it with the catch. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved, and whose power of discernment was sharpened by the devout affection he felt for his Lord, suddenly recognized or divined the person of the figure on the beach, and cries out in joyful wonder, "It is the Lord!" And Peter, on the strength of John's word, and eager to meet his Lord without delay, plunges into the water and swims and wades ashore, and stands there dripping and radiant before the Master, while the rest of the fishermen slowly bring their craft, heavily dragging their net, and leap out upon the sand to greet the Friend who has wrought a marvel in their behalf. The rising sun sends his first beams down upon a group of happy toilers who have found their Lord in the common work of the world.



If we can not discover Christ in this way, we can never find Him elsewhere. If He is not on the sea with the fishing boat, or in the busy mart, or in the furrow of the field, or at the forge, or in the shop, He can not be found in the church or at the altar. If we looked deeper into the causes of our successes, we should see that He is responsible for them, and should pay our vows unto Him in the presence of the world. All unknown He has guided us to the spot where labor is rewarded. "It is the Lord!" we have sometimes said, as our eyes have been opened. To Him always the glory of our triumphs belongs.

"Bring of the fish which ye have now caught," says Jesus to the fishermen. Then Peter, muscular and mighty, ready and responding, wades out into the water, throws one end of the net over his shoulder, and striding forward drags the whole wet and heavy burden to the feet of his Master. The result of the haul has been secured.

It is all a parable of Christian effort. The disciples of Jesus are always to be doing, always to be trusting, always to be expecting their Lord. He will surely come with blessing. We are toiling on the sea of life. We often spend whole nights fruitlessly. But the Master is waiting on the shore. In the dim light before the day has broken, faith enables us to discern His presence. He directs the work at the moment when failure has been recorded. Lo! success comes out of disaster. We shall go ashore after a little, dragging our nets with us. What we have gained is ours and His alike. We shall break our fast on the heavenly strand and it will be eternal day.

## XXIV.

### THE FINAL COMMISSION OF PETER.

#### CHAPTER XXI, 15-23.

No other Gospel is more faithful to historical situations; no other Gospel is more keenly alive to psychological presentations. Its portraiture of Jesus, different as is its setting from that of the Synoptics, is thoroughly consistent with theirs. What they exhibit constantly in action, and now and then by word, is here completely interpreted in that blaze of glory which casts a noon-day clearness upon the person and character of the Messiah.—*Riggs.*

IN Christ's appearance before the evening assembly He had conferred the apostolic commission upon His disciples as a body (xx, 19-23), and in the appearance just narrated (xxi, 1-14) He had shown by an unmistakable sign the success which, under His direction, would accompany their work. He now has some special communications for that disciple who is to enjoy the privileges and suffer the pains incident to the most conspicuous place in the apostolic band. He will through this means fully restore Peter to the position of primacy which he has recently forfeited by his cowardice and falsehood, commission him anew to his heroic task, and correct his judgments concerning the work of the future.

Jesus had already manifested Himself to Peter alone. (Luke xxiv, 34; 1 Cor. xv, 5.) It is probable that at this time the recreant disciple had received forgiveness, for his manner of meeting Christ in the episode just related seems to prove that a reconciliation had been effected and mutual confidence restored between himself and his Master. But he had

not yet been formally restored to his former pre-eminence among the apostles. This is now to be granted him. It was after the miraculous draught of fishes recorded in Luke v, 1-11, that he had received his original commission to the apostleship; it is after the second and more wonderful exhibition of the same sort that he receives it anew. The first miracle showed Peter how mighty Christ was; the second, how necessary for the work of an apostle His assistance was. In connection with his restoration, Peter is also given a differentiation of his and John's specific work in the future. The passage includes 1. The Restoration of Peter; 2. The Future of Peter and John.

#### I. THE RESTORATION OF PETER. (15-17.)

During the breakfast at the lake side, Jesus delivers no personal charge to His disciples, the conversation being a sacred table-talk full of good cheer and blessing, the Lord taking the lead, and the disciples giving themselves up to wonder and joy in His presence. But when the meal had been concluded, the Master turned to Peter and said, with gentle abruptness, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" The form of address used three times in succession is not without significance. It recalls the first utterance of Jesus to this disciple (i, 42), when the surname of Cephas, "a stone" (Peter), was conferred upon him. It is noteworthy that the evangelists do not record that Jesus employed this surname more than once (Matt. xvi, 18), though the writers themselves use "Peter" and "Simon Peter" almost invariably. John always used both names, except in a single instance (i, 41). At the time he was writing it was the apostle's most familiar designation. The distinction thus drawn between the practice of Jesus and that of the evangelists marks the exactness with which the words of Christ are reported. There is no necessary implication in the address of Jesus that Simon had lost his right to be called Peter by his denials of his Lord. At the same time the mention of his descent is apparently intended to turn the man's attention to his natural origin,

quite apart from his apostleship, and perhaps to the sinful condition from which he had been drawn by the summons of Jesus, and into which he had but recently relapsed. It was calculated to inspire in him a solemn realization of his present unfortunate state.

The circumstances of Peter's previous behavior make it apparent that the words "more than these" do not mean "more than these things," referring to the instruments of his craft, nor "more than these persons," referring to his companions. They can only mean "Lovest thou Me more than these [other disciples] love Me?" There is a sharp glance backward to the protestation of Peter that though all men should forsake Jesus, he would never be guilty of that disloyalty (Matt. xxvi, 33), and to the declaration that he was ready at a moment's warning to die for his Master (xiii, 37). Jesus asks him whether he now feels that his devotion is firmer than that of the other disciples.

The response of Peter is very significant. It is strongly affirmative, but it is characterized by delicate shadings which no inventor of such a conversation would have been likely to fabricate. He says, "Yea," but does not say, "Yea, more than these love Thee I love Thee." His painful recollection of his default will not permit him to cherish that illusion. He does not assert his love on the ground of any confidence he has in himself, for he has learned to distrust himself. He appeals to the knowledge which Christ has of his inner self. "Thou knowest that I love Thee." Moreover, he shrinks from using the same word for "love" that Jesus has employed, which signifies the higher spiritual attachment, involving a measure of discrimination, the word used in xiii, 34, xiv, 15, and elsewhere. He prefers a word for "love" which has the meaning of natural affection, but a word of much warmth. (See, for contrasted meanings, pages 12, 13.) The word used by Jesus "denotes a state of feeling that is closely related to the judgment and the moral sense." The word used by Peter is "expressive of affection rather than devotion."—*McClymont, Century Bible*. The first is "love with the love of reverence,"

the second is "love in the sense of personal attachment." —*Godet*. It is noteworthy that Peter says nothing about what he will do in the future. He is only certain of himself for the moment. It is a modest and sorrowful, rather than a bold and exuberant, Peter now.

Immediately Jesus restores Peter's original personal commission. "Feed My lambs," He says. There is a change of figure and an enlargement of the conception of the apostolic office. We pass from fishing to feeding. It is not enough to catch men; they must be nourished. And this can only be done through an inward sympathy with them which has its root in love. This is the first of three aspects under which the work of the apostles is presented, and it is in a sense the humblest —feeding the little ones of Christ's flock.

After a brief pause, Jesus asks the disquieting question anew, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" This time there is no comparison, the words, "more than these," being delicately omitted. Peter's response is identical with what he has already uttered. He can say no more. He still refrains from using the exalted word for "love," though Christ persists in speaking it. "Feed My sheep" is the second form of the commission. "Tend My sheep," or "Shepherd My sheep," would be a more precise rendering. It involves guidance. The lambs require food and care. The sheep must have both nourishment and personal direction. Love is indispensable for this difficult task.

A third time Jesus puts the question, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" but with a significant change. He now adopts the word for "love" to which Peter has steadfastly clung. As he has dropped the comparison, "more than these," so He now puts aside the loftier term for love. He virtually challenges Peter's strongly asserted affection, the one form of love he has claimed as his own, and demands whether in this way Peter's words are to be taken at their apparent worth. Peter feels the thrust keenly. Three times he is asked if he loves his Lord, corresponding to the three times he denied his Lord, and the third time there is an alteration of

speech which must be regarded as having an intentional meaning. Peter is represented as being grieved. He is well aware that Christ's apparent distrust of his professed affection is justified by that which happened only a little while ago. He feels the situation keenly, and in his reply he drops his "yea" of strong confidence, and casts himself with a kind of desperation upon the omniscience of Jesus: "Thou knowest all things [I make no claim for myself]. Thou knowest that I love Thee." It is most pathetic, but it meets the test of Jesus.

For the third time Peter receives his restored commission, "Feed My sheep." The guidance and government of the flock is not to exclude the specific work of instruction for individuals. Support, as well as guidance, is demanded. So the apostles understood their obligation. (Acts xx, 31.) Peter remembered these words to the end of his days. (1 Peter ii, 25; v, 1-4.) Westcott appropriately remarks the Master's use of "My" in connection with the sheep. "It will be noticed," he says, "that the Lord retains His own right to those who are committed to the apostle's care."

## II. THE FUTURE OF PETER AND JOHN. (18-23.)

Jesus now discloses to Peter the issues of his work, so far as relates to his own experience. He will thus see how he can make proof of the love for Christ which he has protested, and so obliterate the sad record of denials. "Verily, verily," is a characteristic introduction of an especially important and solemn affirmation. It appears twenty-five times in this Gospel. In the Synoptics the "verily" is never repeated.

The Lord now draws a contrast between the former state of Peter, when he was free to do as he pleased, able to take the initiative in any business he cared to undertake, and to follow his own inclination as to the manner of its performance, and the time to come, when he will be mastered by his devotion to such an extent that he will be compelled to suffer martyrdom, when he is old, thirty years hence. The stretching forth the



hands and the being girded by another may not refer to the precise form of his death, but to the violence and compulsion of it, though Tertullian testifies to the fact of Peter's crucifixion, and Eusebius, on the word of Origen, affirms that he was crucified with his head downward at his own request. In any event, John declares that Jesus made His prediction in order to signify "by what death he should glorify God," an expression for martyrdom which was to be much used in the following centuries.

"Follow Me," says Jesus to Peter, and probably moves away as He speaks. Did the Master mean to draw the apostle apart for conversation, or to lead him at once into the active ministry, or call him into that martyrdom which His own example would reach, or to summon him into the invisible world whither he would soon take His pilgrimage? Perhaps the first of these purposes is the natural one, though it is impossible to tell for what reason Jesus would desire a private interview with Peter. The physical act is, however, symbolical in character. Eventually the following of Christ would include even crucifixion. It is evident that as Peter draws after his Lord he is beginning that course which will result in partaking of his Master's experiences to the uttermost.

Turning back for a moment, Peter observes that John is also following. He is "the disciple whom Jesus loved." (xiii, 23; xxi, 7; xix, 26; xx, 2.) He would naturally follow Jesus. Peter must needs first learn to follow Him. John knows that nothing can happen between Peter and Christ from which he will be excluded. Without invitation, he moves off after his Lord. But the fact arrests Peter's attention. "Lord, and this man—what?" he exclaims. The question is not inspired by jealousy, as though Peter would say, "If I am to suffer martyrdom, surely this man should not escape it." The cordial relations between Peter and John forbid such an interpretation. The former felt for the latter as an elder brother toward a younger. Moreover, John's treatment of Peter's record is so considerate that no room is left for the supposition that either was ill-disposed

toward the other. The question arises naturally from the circumstance that John, who is Peter's constant companion, is also following Jesus. It is incited by sympathy, and the desire that he and John shall be recipients of like treatment. Nevertheless, there is an element of curiosity in the question characteristic of Peter's disposition to meddle with affairs not his own. It is an indiscretion on his part which Jesus feels bound to rebuke. The question betrays a lack of poise and a failure to consider his own duty with sufficient seriousness. It is enough for him to follow Jesus and perform his own task. He is unwise to inquire into the responsibility of another. He is not his brother's keeper in the sense of being accountable for the work which Jesus will apportion to him.

"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me," is a retort which gave rise to a misconception of John's future. The coming of Jesus may not be assigned to any definite point of time, but if this be insisted upon, Pentecost, the destruction of Jerusalem, natural death, and other explanations do not appear so natural as the second advent. As a matter of fact, the statement is indefinite. It is not an answer to Peter's question, but a refusal to give an answer. The inference made from it was that John would not die, because it was supposed that the second advent of Jesus was imminent. John writes this epilogue to his Gospel to correct this misunderstanding, and reminds his readers that Jesus did not say he should escape death. A tradition long survived that John was sleeping in his grave at Ephesus, and that the heaving of the earth indicated that he was living and breathing beneath his tomb. Godet suggests that "as the primitive epoch of humanity had its Enoch, and the theocratic epoch its Elijah, the Christian epoch might well have also its leader freed from death."

The contrast between the work of Peter and that of John has been drawn by Westcott in these words: "The one is the minister of action, whose service is consummated by the martyrdom of death; the other is the

minister of thought and teaching, whose service is perfected in the martyrdom of life."

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### The Ultimate Test.

*"Lovest thou Me?"—John xxi, 15.*

"WISH to win the suffrages of your own inward approval," said Epictetus, "wish to appear beautiful to God." The disciple to whom Jesus addressed the words of the text had forfeited the approval of his own heart and dared not think himself beautiful in the sight of his Lord. Jesus possessed marvelous ability to sound the depths of human spirits. To such an extent did He exhibit this penetrating power that one can not avoid being surprised that he was ever invited to dine with men whose inmost lives would be subjected to His unflinching scrutiny. Even when Jesus was Himself made the object of examination by those who were intent upon embarrassing Him, the relative positions were quickly altered and the examiner became the candidate. It was not the quibbling lawyer who was really scrutinizing Jesus; it was Jesus who was drawing to the surface all there was of the lawyer. It was not the Pharisees who were driving Jesus into a network of self-inculpation from which He could not extricate Himself; it was Jesus who was binding the Pharisees hand and foot. It was not Pilate who was actually sitting in judgment on Christ; it was Christ who was apportioning destiny to the Roman procurator. Thus He was ever reversing the order which His enemies sought to put into effect, and by His wondrous power of analysis was laying bare the weakness and wickedness of men. He never left any man in doubt touching his real self. A word, a question, a look, would utterly expose the faulty one to himself. "Lovest thou Me more than these?" was a searchlight on the soul of Peter which uncovered much that was painful to his gaze. Could he calmly say

that his love for Christ was firmer than that of his comrades when he remembered that, despite his protestations of willingness to die for his Master, he had cravenly denied Him and sealed his infidelity with an oath? It was not strange, in view of this terrible default, that Jesus had addressed him by a formal designation which carried the mind back to the old, fleshly days, before the period of discipleship, in the time of spiritual blindness and estrangement from God. But how chilling were the recollections thus awakened, and how far away Christ seemed for the moment! Not more than these comrades who had been faithful to their Lord could Peter honestly say he loved Christ, yet in the deepest recesses of his nature he was sure that his heart was set upon the Master. "Yea, Lord," he exclaims, "Thou knowest that I love Thee!" He could not venture to say that he loved Christ in that lofty, spiritual fashion which the Master's choice of words defined, but with a profound, passionate, human affection that never stopped to question, so eager and ardent was it, he did love his Lord. "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee!" He had no right to be dissatisfied because Jesus challenged his love three times in succession, for he had denied his Lord just that many times; and yet he was grieved at the insistent repetition of the question, which cut like a sword into his quivering heart. Perhaps he had been too self-reliant, even in the expression of his affection. He would cast himself upon the omniscience and considerateness of Christ. "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." How deeply those thrice-recurrent words, "Lovest thou Me?"—from the lips of the Lord to the soul of the disciple—peered into the very life of the man and showed him what he was! And how clearly the honest answers of the crestfallen disciple revealed what he was capable of becoming!



"Lovest thou Me?" is a test applied to the discovery of character. Bengel's aphorism is true, "Where love is not, there is hatred, for the heart is not a vacuum."

The converse is equally true—a genuine love excludes all unworthy passions. It expels all hostile competitions. Peter had shown great weakness, but he could truthfully say that his heart clung to Christ. What the soul loves determines its quality. The passion for power, money, pleasure, ease, marks the worshiper of self, who says to his soul, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me!" The love of home, country, nature, humanity, goodness, signalizes a character of excellence. The commonest mind can perceive the reason for this. Now Christ is the embodiment of goodness. To love Him is to be enamored of righteousness. Holiness almost always had a cheerless and forbidding aspect to all save a few mystics until Jesus gave it warmth, vitality, and charm. He makes it lovable by incarnating it in the most attractive personality known to history. To love the Christ is to have a character of beauty and strength. What Peter actually was, depended upon the answer he could frankly give to the question of Jesus. "Lovest thou Me?" The real character of every man is determined by the same test.

Love is far deeper and more spiritual than admiration. Yet a man who simply admires Jesus has the beginnings of goodness in him. Such a veneration for Christ as Napoleon often expressed goes far to redeem his character from unworthiness. But love not only exceeds admiration; it is of a different quality. It can not be defined in terms of speech, nor measured by ordinary standards of calculation. It is not grounded in reason, and it can not be compelled by argument. It is the free, spontaneous out-rushing of the soul toward the object of its desire with a current strong enough to master every other passion. If such a dominating affection be directed to a noble ideal, it will surely beautify and strengthen character. There is saving power in a pure love. The prisoner who becomes fond of the flower which blooms in the barred window of his cell undergoes a gentle transformation under the spell of its beauty and fragrance. The soul that is drawn to the Christ by the energy of a spiritual affinity has by that fact already



achieved a character which will develop into true nobility so long as he yields to the sovereignty of his holy affection. Peter was not a perfect man, but he was under the sway of a perfect ideal. He loved Christ, and his passion would ultimately make him like his Master.

Erasmus often confessed that he was not of the stuff out of which martyrs are made, and once he said, "For myself, if it came to the point, I should do no better than Simon Peter." We are prone to reflect unduly upon the deficiencies of the errant disciple. It were wiser to remember that love to Christ was the central fire of his being, which finally purged him of cowardice and weakness and wrought in him a vast spiritual reconstruction. It was his love which constituted him a worthy man in Christ's esteem. The Master could overlook his shortcomings and backslidings in recognition of the fundamental trueness of his heart. Cranmer, recanting his opinions through fear of death, is not the real man whom we are to keep in remembrance, but Cranmer, stoutly reaffirming his convictions and bravely dying in the flames to seal his faith. A father might stand rooted in terror while his child was drowning before his eyes—because the suddenness of the demand upon his courage had paralyzed his will and driven his mental energies into panic—who, under some more severe ordeal, when his faculties were in control, might display the utmost bravery. Christians are sometimes tempted unexpectedly, insidiously, and terribly, from a source whence no attack was suspected, on a side of their natures where the defenses are weakest and least prepared, with no time to think and no opportunity to summon reinforcements. They succumb apparently without resistance, and the world ridicules their supposed hypocrisy. Yet their love for Christ is unshaken, their faith in Him is unimpaired. They are victims of mental confusion rather than moral infirmity. It is impossible for the world to judge correctly in such tragic instances. It is equally impossible for Christ to judge incorrectly. The conscience-stricken, heart-broken penitent may look up into the kind face of his Master



and say, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, and Thou knowest that I love Thee."

Lowell has expressed as a hope what doubtless is realized as a fact in the attitude of the Lord of glory toward His aspiring but fainting disciples:

"Ah! let us hope that to our praise,  
 Good God, not only reckons  
 The moment when we tread His ways,  
 But when the Spirit beckons;  
 That some slight good is also wrought  
 Beyond self-satisfaction,  
 When we are simply good in thought,  
 Howe'er we fail in action."

The crucial test respecting the character of the Christian is not, What is his profession? (Poor Peter was emphatic enough in that regard) but, What is his supreme affection? Does he love Christ? In the end his pure devotion will make him Christlike.



"Lovest thou Me?" is a test applied to the discovery of faith. The highest form of believing is loving. Human affections reveal this clearly enough. The mother believes in her wayward son when every one else has given him up for lost. She loves him with a profound and unwearied devotion. The child believes in his father when others question his wisdom and his virtue. Love does not reason, but rests blindly on the object of desire. It is convinced that the loved person can not be other than true and worthy. The disciple believes in his Lord when beset by all the arguments infidelity can mass against Him and when no answer of the mind is adequate to meet the censure of the world. When a boy in a mission class was asked to define faith, he replied with the wisdom which comes from above, "It is grasping Christ with the heart." It is truly love which dictates belief.

Jesus undoubtedly built His hopes of success with men, not on creeds but on the love of those who fol-

lowed Him. He does not ask Peter, "Believest thou Me?" Suppose He had said to the recreant disciple: "Stand before Me, Simon Peter; raise your right hand and, in the presence of these witnesses who are thoroughly acquainted with your former derelictions and failures, and with your eye on the final judgment, swear to be faithful to the teachings I have imparted." The pitiful weakness of such a procedure would be apparent to every one. Love will fix the articles of religion in Peter's soul. The American people compel their Chief Magistrate to take the oath of office under circumstances of the greatest solemnity, but there never was a ceremonial impressive enough to keep any man true to his obligations against the seductions of self-interest, if he had not an absorbing love for his country's freedom and an unwavering devotion to its institutions of government. All the creeds of Christendom are insufficient to conquer the alien peoples of the earth to the faith of the cross; but the love of Christ's disciples, knitting them together into one indissoluble body, will convince the world "that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." For all humanity is touched by love wherever manifested. The humblest minds can understand it. The deepest philosophies can not explain it. It is the mystery which God and man share together. If Jesus can have the unfeigned love of His disciples, He can be sure of their loyalty to the faith for which He died.

The teachings of the apostles reflect the mind of Christ. Paul says, "Now abideth faith, hope, love, but the greatest of these is love." Love includes and inspires all the graces of a Christian life. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Love to God accompanied, as it inevitably must be, by love to man, Jesus constituted the summary of all the obligations of a devout life. The Ten Commandments require no formal writing in the conduct and regulation of a character consecrated to Christ. They will be the natural expression of a loving life. No Chinese wall of exclusion and defense can protect a soul from the assaults of evil, but a heart in which the love

of Christ is intrenched will repel the forces of unrighteousness by an interior divine energy.

Saint Catherine of Siena, one of the greatest figures in the fourteenth century, and one of the holiest persons in any age, was once beset by evil thoughts and tempting visions. "Profane words, such as she could never have heard, rang in her ears." Her cell seemed to be thronged with fiends. She was possessed of a wild desire to run away from the torment of her iniquitous tempters. In her despair she constantly repeated, "I trust in my Lord Jesus Christ and not in myself." Finally she received a vision of her Lord extended on the cross, who said to her: "My own daughter Catherine, see'st thou how much I have suffered for thee? Be it not hard for thee to suffer somewhat for Me!" She was thrilled by the words, "My own daughter Catherine," and asked, "Where wert Thou, Lord, when my heart was filled with such impurity?" The answer of Christ was, "In thy heart." The powers of hell have no arts seductive or strong enough to lure from the truth a soul that is centered in the love of Christ.



"Lovest thou Me?" is a test applied to the discovery of serviceableness. Peter's fitness for the apostleship is determined, not by his intellectual equipment nor his theological soundness, but by his love for Christ. As Westcott says, "The foundation of the apostolic office is laid in love and not in belief." Jesus could only depend upon a man who deeply loved Him to carry forward the vast work which He was about to entrust to His disciples.

Love is the most potent motive for any kind of labor. It is a terrible thing to be compelled to toil with no higher object than to secure a livelihood. But to work for the sake of wife and children, driven by the impulse of love, makes weariness a blessing. It is a degrading thing to fight on a field of carnage merely to satisfy the spirit of revenge, or for the bribe of a monarch's gold, or for the attainment of a bauble of glory. But to fight for love of native land or devotion to holy liberty is

to make warfare a heavenly experience. It is a deadening thing to toil from compulsion, lashed by the whip of a slave-driver, sweating and groaning under the burden of unrequited effort. But to work one's fingers to the bone for the love of a noble cause or the fellowship of a kindred soul is to make the most arduous life a luxury.

Jesus made His appeal for workers to this motive. He constrained His disciples to love Him, and He is accomplishing through the widening centuries what He set out to do. "We love Him because He first loved us" is the explanation of their devotion which the confessors of all time are ready to make. It is an old truth made new by the power of Christ's divine passion. Love provokes love. The lowest characters are not insensible to it. The greatest souls are conquered by it. Jesus can accomplish the desire of His heart so long as He has followers who respond to His love.

It is in this way that He has secured from His disciples the magnificent service which has overrun the world with evangelistic agencies. The missionary movement of modern times has its origin and motive in this devotion to the Son of man. The whole earth will ultimately be subjugated to the cross because men and women who love Christ count no service too hard a sacrifice which honors their Lord. David Livingstone said: "People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Say, rather, it is a privilege; I never made a sacrifice." That is the spirit of the true missionary wherever he is found. Of Henry Martyn, the devout Christian scholar, it is written: "At Dinapore and Cawnpore he discharged his duties as chaplain with a rare fidelity; and in the evenings opened the gates of his garden to a crowd of devotees, beggars, and vagrants to whom he read some simple words of Scripture—a frightful crowd, often five hundred in number, clothed in rags or without clothes, plastered with mud, and with long matted locks of hair streaming to their heels, every countenance foul and frightful with evil passion, their lips black with tobacco, or crimson with henna. From time to time he was interrupted by low

murmurs and hisses and fierce cries, which would rise till they drowned the pure, calm, musical voice ; but when the storm passed he might be heard going on again where he had left off, in the same steadfast tones, as if he were incapable of interruption." He supplemented his arduous evangelistic labors by translating the Scriptures into Hindostani and Persian, though he was a dying man, and he persisted in his loving toil until he sank into the grave. "There is nothing grander in the annals of Christianity than the picture of Henry Martyn, with the Bible in hand, alone and unsupported in a strange country, challenging the whole strength of Mohammedanism to a conflict." The inspiration and the sustenance of this heroism was simple devotion to Jesus Christ, not faith in a creed, not the constraint of conscience, but a pure and absorbing love for the Master, such as Jesus found in the heart of Simon Peter when He said, "Feed My sheep!" This is the criterion of serviceability: "Lovest thou Me?" And whosoever can truly respond, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee," requires no other credential for his apostolate. The Church may demand a varied equipment for his work, and all the culture he can secure will be found profitable in the pursuit of his calling. But love to Jesus the Christ will be the one qualification which no worldly competitions can dim, the one inspiration which no toil or weariness can quench.

## XXV.

### CONCLUDING NOTES.

#### CHAPTER XXI, 24, 25.

Coming to the close of this Gospel, we can not but most seriously ask ourselves whether in our case it has accomplished its object. John has none of the artifice of the modern teacher who veils his didactic purpose from the reader. He plainly avows his object in writing: "These signs are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name."—*Dods*.

NOTWITHSTANDING the fact that the first of these verses is found in every extant manuscript and version of John's Gospel, it is difficult to avoid the conviction that it was not written by the hand of the evangelist. The impression its language leaves upon the mind is that a group of persons fully acquainted with John's character and ministry, probably, as has been conjectured, the Ephesian elders, have added this note of authentication before the publication of the Gospel. The change to the singular number in the last verse points to the work of a third writer, who subjoins a declaration which, it has been suggested, he may have heard from the lips of John. If this supposition is correct (and the fact that this verse is lacking in the Sinaitic manuscript would apparently indicate the hand of an early if not a contemporary amanuensis) it is not difficult to imagine what occurred. John has finished his Gospel and, for reasons already cited, has added an explanatory appendix. Before he issues his immortal document, the Ephesian elders lovingly affix their official certification to it. A little later a devout copyist, having read the whole book, concludes that he will make a note which will assure all future readers that, while all that John wrote was true



beyond any question, yet it was not the whole truth. It was far from representing the entire possibilities in the case of Christ's life. Neither would John's Gospel and the narratives of the Synoptists, taken together, fill the measure of its greatness. In fact, the world would be too small to contain the literature which might be produced from the marvelous sayings and doings of Jesus.

It is plain that the motive of this unknown writer was not to applaud John the apostle, but to glorify Jesus the Christ. The artists have emulated Him in this respect, placing a halo of light around His head, grouping emperors and kings, statesmen and burghers, noble men and beautiful women about His feet in lowly adoration. The very world has been pictured as His footstool, and the heavens have been spread as the canopy of His throne. All that imagination could bring forth in rare and costly investiture has been employed to glorify the person of Christ. The monks in their cloisters in the centuries long gone toiled with profound patience and eager affection to illumine the text of Scripture and the pages of devotional books with scenes from the life of the Christ, portrayed with delicate art, not to magnify the writings of inspired men, but to glorify the Son of God. As we have never looked upon a picture of Jesus which we thought noble enough to express His sublime character, so this unknown writer knew that even the masterly production of John fell short of the fullness of Christ's moral stature.

When Thomas Carlyle saw an impressive portrait of Daniel Webster, he exclaimed, "I wonder if any man can possibly be as great as that man looks!" When one finishes the Gospel of John, he is moved by a similar feeling respecting the portrait of the Master therein presented. But the amanuensis who placed a postscript at the end of the Gospel is eager to have it understood that Christ was infinitely greater than any man can describe Him. "I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written," if the whole about Christ were set down in writing.

The constant longing of Christendom for an ampler knowledge of Jesus is expressed in this sentence. There is no escape from the feeling that the Gospels are fragmentary. Indeed, they make no claim to completeness. They cover at best a few hours in the earthly career of the world's greatest personality. The Gospel of John excites our desire for a larger survey, a richer detail of the Lord's ministry among men. The apocryphal Gospels, which arose in the early centuries, and which even yet are occasionally unearthed from the ruins of the past, crudely written as they are, and untrue to the ideals of the Christ-life as in many instances we must confess them to be, are the result of attempts to gratify the natural wish of the Christian for a wider knowledge of his Lord's human life. Legends of Jesus, certain of which may have some slender historical warrant, belong also to the literature produced with a view to supplying the deficiencies of the authentic record. The tales of Christ's appearance in various forms to fortunate individuals which adorn the folklore of several Christian nations, such as the reputed visit of the Christ-child to every other child on Christmas morning, and the numerous visions of the Savior which tradition declares have been vouchsafed to saints in all ages, are of the same category. Add to these the almost innumerable "Lives of Christ" which have undertaken to work out by fancy and recourse to contemporary history the probable mode and content of Christ's daily experience, and the paintings and figures of Jesus from the days of Alexander Severus, who kept a statue of the Master in his gallery, to those of Tissot, the French artist, who has given us the most realistic portrayal of scenes from the land of the Messiah's birth, and we have sufficient illustrations of the world's unquenchable feeling that only the bare outline of Christ's earthly biography has been given in the Gospel memoirs.

The exaggeration of the unknown writer is more apparent than real. Such hyperbole as he employs is quite permissible when one wishes to express the impossibility of exhausting a theme so exalted. The Scriptures are

replete with examples of like rhetorical license. Canaan is described as "a land flowing with milk and honey." The spies who were opposed to invading it, pictured giants in that land so huge that "we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." The Midianites in the time of Gideon are recorded as coming up against the people of Israel, "as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number." Solomon is represented as having made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones. When the writer of this last sentence in John's Gospel says the books would everflow the world if all that Jesus did were narrated, he is guilty of nothing worse than the bankruptcy of his imagination. He has no better figure at his command to illustrate the infinite abundance of Christ's life.

No biography is ever complete. The commonest lives contain the materials of a great drama. The minister of religion, going to the house of mourning to comfort the bereaved, hears words about the loved and lost which the outer circle of society would not dream possible. The elements of poetry, romance, tragedy, and farce appear in the humblest careers. It needs but the deft hand to weave them into effective literature. When the deeds of great men are examined, in the pages of history, those who have taken knowledge of their results are convinced that the doers must have wrought more wondrously than their memorialists have known how to set forth. The biography of Jesus could not have been written in full. He went about constantly doing good. His own kin thought Him mad with an intemperate enthusiasm because He neglected food and rest that He might help the suffering. But three short years, together with some momentary glimpses of His infancy and boyhood, are traversed by the evangelists. That is, less than one-tenth of His earthly sojourn is even ostensibly recorded. A few miracles out of multitudes are described. A few sayings out of thousands are preserved. Suppose we had all He said and did, and could follow these immediate products of His life to their

results in the minds and hearts of the throngs which hung upon His ministry, and thence in the amazing literature which has sprung from His inspiring example and teaching, should we feel that the unknown writer had taxed our credulity unfairly? And if, beyond all this, we could trace the works of Jesus to their eternal consequences, we should be constrained to acknowledge that the last verse in John's Gospel is not even hyperbole, but a mere straining to write down the inexpressible. For, if these words are not precise historically, they are gloriously true as prophecy. What the Son of man is doing now, and will continue to perform in the coming ages, could not be contained in the books which this world is able to accommodate. Perhaps it will be an occupation of the redeemed in heaven to peruse the infinite details of the life of Jesus.

Meanwhile, it is the unquestioned obligation of all Christians to fill the world with volumes of testimony. No spiritual genius like John is likely to appear again in this poor world to celebrate with approximately fit language the glories of Christ. But every soul brought to the truth by the witness of a saved life becomes a book of testimony to the grandeur of Jesus. This is the exalted task which has been granted as a high privilege to every disciple of our Lord.

Tolstoi's writing is almost indecipherable. It is said that there is but one person in all Russia who can read every word of it—his wife. She has copied all his works before they were sent to the printer, some of them six times, and all of them at least once. Observe the length of those mighty books, and reflect on the number which have proceeded from their author's prolific brain. What infinite patience, what enormous labor has been involved in this task of love! No one can transcribe the life of Christ but the devout Christian. His is the noblest duty in the world. In proportion to the fidelity with which he does it will be the number of those who are persuaded "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and who thus believing "have life in His name."

To be loyal to this divine trust is to realize in advance of eternity the vision of the Apostle John: "After this I beheld, and lo! a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb!"



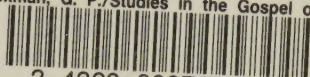






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